Vol. II No. 11

THE DOUBLE DEALER

NOVEMBER 1921

CONTENTS

EDITORIALS 178
THE MASTER ..... *Babette Deutsch* 184
ICH LIEBE DICH ..... *Israel Solon* 185
THE LOST COMRADE ..... *Mary Coles Carrington* 190
THE GRAND DUCHESS RECEIVES (*A Play in One Act*) ... *Louis Gilmore* 191
IDOLATORS ..... *Wilbur Laurence Needham* 201
MEASURE ..... *Babette Deutsch* 202
THE PASSING OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL ..... *Vincent Starrett* 203
OLD SATAN ..... *Alice Corbin* 210
THE IVORY TOWER ..... *Edith Chapman* 211
WHITE SAILS AGAINST THE MORNING ..... *Glenn Ward Dresbach* 215
THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SMELLS ..... *Lafcadio Hearn* 216
ON SOME VIOLINISTS ..... *Arthur Symons* 217
UPHOLDING THE WORLD ..... *Edward Sapir* 221
KREYMBORG'S LETTER ..... *Alfred Kreymborg* 222
REVIEWS—
THE PLAYS OF ALFRED KREYMBORG ..... *Lola Ridge* 224
AN OSCAR WILDE DISCOVERY ..... *Michael Monahan* 229
THE GLASS OF FASHION ..... *Alice Sessums Leovy* 231

Issued monthly by *The Double Dealer Publishing Co., Inc.*, 204 Baronne street, New Orleans, La. Yearly subscription, twelve months, two dollars and a half in advance; single copies, twenty-five cents. All contributions should be addressed to the Editors of *The Double Dealer*, with stamped, self-addressed envelopes for their return.

Entered as second-class matter January 31, 1921, at the Post Office at New Orleans, La., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Copyright, 1921, by *The Double Dealer Publishing Co., Inc.*

The DOUBLE DEALER

".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

ONE has but to glance over the columns of the local press to become aware of the astonishing activities which are taking place in that section of New Orleans familiarly known as the Vieux Carrè. Whereas, a walk down the Rue Royale would do more than confirm the impression that present-day New Orleans has at length begun to recognize the charm and possibilities of the "old town." Certainly nowhere in this country may one discover environs at once so quaint and colorful. The native Latin note, always so conspicuous in the South's metropolis, hereabouts fairly captivates you. A fine sort of old world flavor insinuates itself as you cross the Rue Bienville in your Royal progress toward La Maison Morphy, L'Ombre de la Cathedral, the Cabildo, the Place d'Armes, and Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre in the lower Pontalba building.

For some moons it has been my design to call attention in these pages to the admirable work being done by the Little Theater group in New Orleans. Now in its third winter this coterie of enthusiastic amateurs has met with a reception which, I believe, far exceeds any they had counted upon. Withal, a reception well-earned, well-deserved. When an altruistic enterprise becomes not only a social, but a financial success, one begins to conjecture upon the dubious possibilities of kindred undertakings.

The formal opening of La Maison Morphy marks the inception of another creditable and, one hazards, not inauspicious adventure into the limbo of dilettantedom. Your *flaneur* of today unlike your *beau* of yesterday, prefers (or, *nolens volens*, pretends to prefer) small talk and tea to gusto and whisky. Today's *flaneurs* being, for the most part feminine, bless them, and whisky, of course, taboo, one is inclined to protest with Browning that "God's, etc."—begging your indulgence, Mrs. Nietzsche!

Returning to La Maison Morphy. Within its hallowed precincts dwelt for a time and died one Paul Morphy, King of the king of games, chess champion extraordinary. Always a strange lad, fey from the first, he early displayed that peculiarly uncanny brilliance which ordinarily spells madness or a premature end to its possessor. So, this old building which was originally the home of the *Banque de la Louisiane*, the first bank in the Mississippi Valley, constructed twelve decades ago, has been carefully and ingeniously rehabilitated and dedicated to the memory of this Morphy, whose father's residence it became during the forties and fifties.

Herein are assembled four separate businesses, videlicet—The Patio Royal, a tea room; Chic Parisien, a distinctive French establishment (lingerie, etc.); the Paul Morphy Book Shop, and Gallup, Inc., interior decorators. Of the

quartet, I find the book shop most to my taste. Your pardon, Mesdames and Messieurs, but my knowledge of lingerie, cuisine and decorative values is, I confess, quite restricted. May all success attend your ventures and judging from the brave array of pulchritude exhibited on your premises the gay Sieur du Success will not be long in finding his way to your doors.

But the book shop! One sees or seems to see in such a shop the commencement of a new regime in lettered *Nouvelle Orleans*. The place has all the charm of an artist's rendezvous with perhaps the one pleasant failing of freshness and femininity. However, by this very token, it achieves an atmosphere which might be found lacking in a more perfunctory, less feminine establishment. Books there are here and about, bidding you peep behind their gaudy jackets. In time, of course, there will be a larger array, rarer and more diversified—first editions, association items, Americana, incunabula, preciosa, etc.—but all in time. Here, in any event, is a valiant beginning and one that deserves all the encouragement we shamefully diffident Southerners (when it comes to things literary) can give it.

What the South, and in a lesser degree New Orleans, needs more than modern office buildings, large industries, giant factories, bloated commerce and frenzied finance (with all due respect to their significance) is just what the persons behind the Little Theater movement, the Quartier, Arts and Crafts, and Bridlegoose Clubs, the lecture courses, La Maison Morphy and THE DOUBLE DEALER are giving it or trying to give it without thought of profit and applause. But interdependence as ever prevails, and quixotically constructive enterprises depending, more or less, upon the support of the community's *intelligentsia*, must either receive this support or sink into the Sisyphusean futility of finer things.

WIND AND WEATHERCOCKS

THE other evening I saw a long-heralded picture. The cumulative impression left the audience a little more ardently certain that bloodshed as a remedy for international disorders is about as effective as a baseball bat for an irritating and howling infant. But—and this I am after—the story carried along with it a character called "The Prophet", who symbolized what I name for want of a more extensively appealing term, Love—man-love for his fellowman. And the last picture on the last reel was a close-up of the face of this good prophet. And the haunting eyes were those of a fanatic!

It is significant that the audience loved the prophet. Throughout the picture the audience was awed by the prophet. Quite properly conservative heads wagged approval when he preached by indirection his revolution. Yet this prophet was a fanatic, as the rare teachers of the ages were fanatics, as a few men and women today are whom we deem unfortunate because we think them so. If we met the same folks on the street, heard them speak, saw their wild unseeing, nonetheless—some of them—deeply seeing, eyes, we'd snigger

at them, call them "fanatics," and give police headquarters a hurried ring.

One wonders why. Perhaps because we are afraid of new ideas. Because we shy at new ideas as a horse shies at a flying leaf, if we suspect they are the sort of ideas which threaten the animal comfort we call peace. If they suggest change. Did I say new ideas? Not necessarily new. Old, old ideas, as old as the Greeks, as old as the Jews. as old as the Heathen Chinee. We read Plato and applaud Socrates. We read the great books of history and applaud the Teachers. We see the picture and applaud the Prophet.

But Socrates, and the Teachers of revolutionary ideas since the world began, and the Prophet of the picture are comfortably remote. We can view them from a respectable distance. If they aren't fiction for us, they are merely history. "Lovely characters maybe, but a little *gone*, you know—up here—" and we tap our foreheads significantly. Were we to run across them on the city streets, we'd hemlock one, crucify the other, and summon the Lusk Commission, the Superintendent of Police, and the Department of Justice for the third. In great books, in the movies, our fervid fanatics can't step on our physical toes; but in the city streets they might. Remote, they are, lovable enough, and, indeed, sublime; near, they become a menace.

How we squirm from the pain, from the suffering, from the ever-present shame — God save the mark!—of change! How we love the animal comfort we call peace! What a miserable candleflame is our faith in ourselves which sputters out at the first faint puff of a new idea—whether right or wrong, and it matters little—from the lips of a 'roused man! What a curious faith, to suppose that, somehow, new ideas are doomed once we refuse to admit we have them; once we have systematically slain fanatics who insist on drumming ideas into our imminently proper heads.

Renan wrote: "Forever will the contrast of the ideal with the sad reality produce in humanity those revolts against cold reason, which common minds call madness, until the day of their triumph, when those who have combated them are the first to acknowledge their lofty wisdom."

Perhaps, it was meant to be so in the beginning. Perhaps the world needs every one of its militant philistines; if only to give the great Teachers their chance. Perhaps the world needs all high-minded weathercocks, of little use in a windless hour; if only to indicate, one fine day now and then, that there really is a wind!

THE PARTIALLY UNINHIBITED SOUTH

LOLA RIDGE, in a welcome letter to THE DOUBLE DEALER, parenthesizes an interesting conviction of hers concerning Southern inhibitions which seems a significant addendum to recent comment on the South by Editor Mencken. The letter will speak largely for itself, and I am venturing to print it in part—though Miss Ridge apologizes because she thinks it is "badly groomed" and doesn't know it is going to be used here. It is a signally "hopeful" letter, because it bears choice words not only for THE DOUBLE DEALER, but

also for the latterly much maligned literary South.

Miss Ridge writes: "The thing I like best about THE DOUBLE DEALER is its aliveness. (So many of the magazines are dead or, rather, desiccated—full of dry innocuous rot that doesn't even smell—just shakes on you its harmless scales). It's good that you exploit no school and that you have not reached the finality of decisions. With this you might easily fumble—yes, though perhaps you do fumble—but not timidly. You don't feel cautiously about, before daring to move; you plunge; and that you sometimes plunge in the wrong direction doesn't matter at all. (This reminds me that Southern people have not nearly so many inhibitions to contend with as Northern folks. They're not so self-conscious. Intellectually the Yankees are often free and bold—this is the secret of their leadership in nearly all reform movements—but emotionally they seem to have inherited British fear of being laughed at or disapproved of. Southerners have not this fear at all. Intellectually they seem to be in a state of arrested development. But their emotional spontaniety makes me feel sure that bigger and better artists will come out of the South. Probably, too, a revival of romanticism,—though growing intellectual awareness may give this a naturalistic or realistic cloak. Anyhow it will be romantic, for all their gestures are so. Even the hateful lynchings and ridiculous Ku Klux Klans are misdirected gestures of romanticism.)

"I've meandered off over the South and now I've forgotten what I wanted to say—oh yes, this: that from the first number of your magazine on, I feel a continuous distinct thread of *personality* winding through and binding the conglomerate mass of stuff—some very good, some bad—that you print, and giving some sort of form to the whole. THE DOUBLE DEALER makes me think of a vigorous supple body that can give and take blows. It simply has to survive. If, for some reason, it ceased as THE DOUBLE DEALER, it would break out in another place and go on under some other form. This because the urge that gave it birth was primarily emotional. I don't only mean that none of you thought of any material gain—that goes without saying, for who ever made *anything* out of a literary magazine—but that it was a passionate gesture.

"Perhaps you won't agree with me at all, and I seem to have wandered a long way from THE DOUBLE DEALER in the above, but the only way to give you my real reaction was to think without choosing the particular thoughts to express."

How many of us in the South have ever hoped to see the day when the North would find anything promising in lynching and Ku Kluxing? And yet Miss Ridge's phrase, "misdirected gestures of romanticism," has its own illuminating pertinence.

THE NEGLECT OF FORM

ONE would be tempted to say, after a survey of contemporary American books, that the greatest defect of our literature today is the neglect of form. The indictment applies less to the poets, whose sense of form alone makes poets of them, than to

the writers of prose. It is the latter (despite the fact that some verse writers maintain the idea alone is important) who seem particularly to have thrown form overboard. One realizes after a siege of reading that there are hardly a half dozen men in the democracy who are able, or even who endeavor, to write English beautifully and memorably, dressing their ideas in language worthy to endure.

One finds excellent situations or plots or conceptions, well worthy to be remembered. But that is generally all. The craftsmanship, the artistry that forces remembrance is too often lacking. The writer usually seems not even to have suspected the subtleties of his art or the importance of technique in literature. He seems never to have learned that cadence and harmony and rhythm are part of the art of prose. It is a pity, for his doctrine that the idea alone is important has deprived us of a great deal that would have delighted us and of many pleasant ideas which were dressed too poorly to live.

In the arts—rightly or wrongly—only those works are accorded merit which partake of a relative immortality. They must live for a little while. And, contrary to the vulgar opinion, an idea alone can scarcely survive for a generation. It must be encased in sheet armor to weather an age, or even a century. Form alone can carry it, for there is nothing so fragile as an idea. It can escape from the thinker himself in an instant. Unless he imprison it in a cage of some sort, it is lost forever. Polydarcus (and the world) lost a magnificent conception in the Aegean because he was seasick and could not write in his notebook.

An idea carelessly or inaptly phrased is forgotten at once by those who read it or is hopelessly garbled in passing from mouth to mouth. It can not survive. We notice that the perennial ideals and superstitions are preserved by beautiful form. Religion depends upon it. The style of the great teachers is superb and the prayerbooks and testaments of the immortal religions are very pleasant reading, even for a heathen, and very difficult to forget.

The artist, and the thinker no less, must rely absolutely on form for the perpetuation or the communication of emotion or idea. Form, of course, may be either image or word or sound, or a scaffolding of all these. But, whichever it be, the artist who desires either honor or immortality can acquire it only in perfection or beauty of form.

The true artist strives constantly and feverishly to imprison in supremely appropriate expression every idea, emotion or concept which he desires to perpetuate. It is form alone that lives, and though the writer's conceptions be more remarkable than anyone else's, unless he express them in appropriate or beautiful form, his grandchildren will be neither better nor wiser because of them.

It is regrettable enough when men strive for mastery of an art and fail. But it is worse when students of an art make no attempt to master it. In America today there seem to be few writers who have attempted at all to penetrate the mystery of form, which is the innermost mystery of literature as of all the arts. We look in our books for beautiful cadence, harmony and rhythm almost in vain.

THE LITTLE THEATRE

IN theory, at least, a Little Theatre is a theatre without a box office. I say, in theory; because, oftener than not, the box office in the theatre is like Love in the proverb: Throw it out of the door, and it comes back by the window—a Comedy enacted in more than one American Little Theatre. Now, there are two kinds of box office; the box office of professional "Broadway," in which success is measured in dollars and cents,—especially dollars; and that other box office, in which success is measured by the uncritical applause of one's friends. Originally, a protest against the "Broadway" box office, the Little Theatre has constantly to be on guard against both box offices; that is, if it would not renounce its birthright for a mess of pottage. "Anchorites do not dwell in theatres; and peacocks do not flourish in a cell," says Marianne Moore. The love of applause is as universal a failing as the love of money, and neither applause nor money is obtained in the theatre without some sacrifice.

But getting rid of the box office, is, as the phrase goes, destructive criticism. Grant that the box office has been got rid of. What then? The Little Theatre is in a position to enter into its birthright. It becomes a workshop, a laboratory for the conducting of experiments and the making of discoveries, a school for playwrights, actors, scene painters, costumers, electricians, and other workers in the theatre—a school, finally, of all those arts whose sum total, greater than its parts, becomes in the hands of Gordon Craig's ideal director the "Art of the Theatre."

* * *

Life is an onion with layers of illusion. Each layer stripped brings tears and when you tear off the last layer, where is your onion?

The Master

By BABETTE DEUTSCH

I.

I give you more than you can own,
You say, and I believe you.
You take the rose the winds have blown
At your still feet; where I have sown
You reap. And does it grieve you?

II.

The perfect flower should please you most,
The smooth red fragrant beauty.
A bud is just a pretty boast
Of sweetness that, become a ghost,
Outlives a lifetime's duty.

III.

You ever were a connoisseur
Of gardens and such graces.
And I may like to make you stare
With things as fine, if not so rare,
As lotuses or laces.

IV.

You praise musicianly technique,
The discipline of daring.
If one can touch his strings to speak
With tears or triumph, is he "weak"?
Masterly, or uncaring?

V.

Be sure that passion is as wise
As artists' tender fingers.
For truth may prompt a thousand lies;
And music is the pulse that dies
And not the dream that lingers.

VI.

So why pretend you hate or fear
What makes your blood beat faster?
If you are quiet, you may hear
A harmony that comes as near
To shake you, as disaster.

VII.

There is no news in what you say
To make me gasp or tremble.
And certainly I know a way
To hush you, if I go or stay;
Although we both dissemble.

VIII.

For you, my dear, are not the first
To tell me what you've told me.
Though you may bless, while others cursed,
And guess that when you know the worst
You may, a little, hold me.

IX.

Well, we have talked; you should rejoice
That there has been no mincing.
But will you, having had your choice
Of lips more soft than any voice,
Find silence more convincing?

Ich Liebe Dich

BY ISRAEL SOLON

HER name was Lily Barlow. She was small for her twenty years, and she looked as weak and thin and trembling as a naked young birch in a midwinter blast; but she carried a great mass of red hair on her little head, and she had large, round, open blue eyes that seduced your sympathy like a lost kitten. Her head, held somewhat to one side, her tiny mouth and chin, the droop of her thin shoulders, her small round arms, her body, arrested half way between childhood and womanhood, held always in unstable balance, forever tending in your direction, bending with your every movement, insinuating herself with her weakness as unashamed as a tired child—called to you to speak to her, to stroke and soothe her, to love her because of her need of you, because of her fluttering desire.

But that was not what she had been hired for. She was given her seven dollars a week for working ten hours a day in the kitchen of the Panama Lunch Room.

Lily Barlow was not exacting nor discriminating in her friendships, nor did she husband her affections; but you did not wish it otherwise, and did not play for it. Her charm, like herself, was too obviously shoddy to be strongly alluring or greatly alarming. Little, though, and few, as her favors were, they were as nearly the best she could give as they were nearly all she had to offer. And she gave them freely.

How deeply fond of her I had grown I shall not attempt to say. I did not know then and I do not know now, and it does not matter. Knocking about among all sorts of jobs and all kinds of people, I had managed to pick up a lot of odd scraps in several languages—some of them adding little to my honor. The most innocent of these I took to teaching her. There were toasts in bad French, and some in worse Swedish; there was a Russian "jaw-breaker," a free translation of which would be, "A hump under a hump and under a hump a hump"; there was a Polish ditty about a gray horse, a decorated sleigh and a sweetheart; and there was an Italian posy, *"Bella come il sole e' bianca come la neve."* But Lily found it hard to form the various sounds and was not able to remember them. She did manage to learn one thing, though, and learnt to say it well; and soon got to saying it often, thickly, like a child learning to talk, but properly enough accented, *Ich liebe dich, Ich liebe dich.*

What enabled her to learn this when she was not able to learn anything else, it is hard to say. She may have somehow found it easier to learn. But it may have been that she found she could make good use of it. Compelled to be constantly on her feet, for some hours on the jump, the work in the kitchen of the Panama Lunch Room was too hard for her. From the first she had tried to shift and escape it, tried all she had—hanging head, drooping heavy eyelashes, faint sighs, crooked little smiles, and random movements of her body; and, finding that she might add

a serviceable item to her little store of favors, she had learnt to say, *"Ich liebe dich, Ich liebe dich."* This may have been but another of her attempts to shift and escape the hard work. This explanation, though plausible enough, was as uncertain as it was unsatisfying. For you always felt that it may not have been altogether because of her wanting to escape the hard work that she made you so free a tender of her charms. It may have been she was twenty, without friends, tact or pluck; and because she was never quite able to make out how much of real feeling for her there was back of our teasing of her.

Lily Barlow was the kitchen girl in the Panama Lunch Room, and the kitchen girl being the lowest of the menials, she had to make the sandwiches, help the cook, the porter, the dish washer, the counter men—she had to help wherever help was wanted, to run where she was shouted for, helping every one and being helped by no one, in accordance with the kitchen tradition.

But it was when the kitchen girl was a newly arrived Slav peasant girl, unable to utter above a dozen words of mangled English, who appeared to have been hacked out of a cedar stump and looked at you from behind a wooden face, dull, slow, and truculent, that the tradition had grown up. And so the tradition was broken, as it was bound to be broken, when Lily Barlow became the kitchen girl in the Panama Lunch Room; though when it was first broken I cannot recall, nor by whom, whether by me or some one else.

I remember helping her one forenoon. It was the last forenoon. Only a week or two after she had been put to work it must have been, I believe; though it may well have been a month after, or even longer. It was on a cold, rainy morning in early fall. The luncheon rush had set in early and heavy, as it always did in bad weather, when the workers in the neighboring sweatshops and factories would not venture out or venture far. It was only a little after 10 o'clock when the errand boys, with long rows of tin buckets swinging in the notches of long poles, came trudging in for soup, stew and chowder, coffee, tea, milk and cocoa; with waste paper baskets suspended in front and behind them for scores of sandwiches of all kinds, and for cheese cake, poppy-seed rolls, cream puffs, doughnuts, chocolate eclairs, muffins, cuts of pies and cakes. By 11 o'clock the crowds that consumed their food on the premises, while sitting cramped and twisted in long rows of arm chairs running along the walls and down the center of the Panama Lunch Room, stood three and four deep in front of the service counter—pale, lean, unkempt, unbuttoned, disheveled men with faces greasy with sweating, with long, stringy necks rising from opened, crumpled shirts and long stringy arms and legs—moving, moving incessantly, twitching their shoulders, shifting their eyes, muttering to themselves, making nervous inquiries, repeating their orders every few seconds, wallowing under the slackened strain, lost and helpless away from their work.

As usual I was operating the bread cutting and the meat slicing machines. I opened the tins of herring, sardines and salmon, and emptied them into earthenware bowls, placing them all within easy reach of Lily. I carried the

crocks of soup, stew and chowder to the steam tables back of the service counter. And in what time I had left I helped the counter men dish out the orders.

By eleven-thirty the clamor grew maddening. The countermen kept shouting their orders faster and faster; before one stopped another had begun, and with each new order he would recount the total due him from the kitchen. "Four ham white, four—that's seven to come!" "Liver an', on two—how about the salmon rye coming?" And as Lily failed to send out the orders fast enough, the cries of the countermen became more bitter and insistent. I knew that some one would have to help her, else she would lose her job, and we should lose her; so I determined to help her.

Instead of staying back of the service counter and helping to dish out the orders, I popped into the kitchen at every opportunity I could find and what opportunities I could make. When I was able to remain a minute or more I made the salmon and sardine sandwiches for her, because they gave her the most trouble; and when I could stay but a moment, I did some trifle or other, if only to butter a slice or two of bread.

And Lily rewarded me with one and another of her small favors. She kept close to me, though that may have been because she felt flustered and unsteady; but there was also something more in her present behavior that neither of us tried quite to understand. All that while she kept whispering through a corner of her crooked little mouth, that she might not be overheard, "Ich liebe dich, Ich liebe dich."

How long this went on I do not know. At this time of day it could not have been long before I was missed from behind the service counter. I must have known—I could not have helped knowing—that I would be caught, and so should have expected it; and yet, when the manager with his dripping sarcasm asked when I had been promoted to kitchen-girl's assistant, I rocked from foot to foot, on the verge of leaping at him, because of my utter frustration. Nevertheless, I did return to the service counter.

A few minutes later I saw Lily Barlow, dressed in her street things, hurrying past us, on her way to the cashier's desk, to receive her last pay. Lily Barlow had lost her job, and we had lost Lily Barlow.

She did not walk back to say goodbye to any of us; she did not turn around to wave us a hand or give us a parting look. She got out like a child rushing out of a dark vestibule at night, and she was gone from sight in a moment. A soiled overskirt, several frazzled ribbons, a pair of run-down dancing slippers—these, and a few doubtful memories, she had left behind her.

The person who took Lily's place was a hard, brutish, fighting female; she had been through many kitchens and countless battles, and she had acquired a vocabulary that would have been the envy of a Russian army officer of the old regime. She knew precisely where her own and everybody else's rights began, and just where they left off; and she stood ready to row all comers at the first sign of a threatened infringement. The squabbles in the kitchen were now foul and continuous. By the

end of another week the place became impossible, and I left it.

Throughout the year following I kept jumping from one job to another, each new job soon developed something or other to make me abandon it with little or no notice. Oddly enough, my jobs kept improving with each change. Spring found me selling outlying vacant building lots on small weekly payments. I did well at it, and soon showed many outward signs of my prosperity. But the hunger for change was in my blood, and I had to keep moving. By fall I had taken a position with a firm selling used cash registers.

I had been selling cash registers for some months when a "prospect" that every other salesman in the office had tried to "land" and failed was, in turn, assigned to me. It was a West Side saloonkeeper who owned an old Bensinger register, the manufacture of which had been abandoned years before. My turn had now come to try and get this saloonkeeper to exchange this machine for a later type, paying us the difference in cash.

It was a cold, raw morning, with a sharp wind and some dry snow. I dropped a couple of machines into the back of my rig and made ready to drive out there. As I was tucking the robes in about me, several of the men put their heads out the front door and wished me luck in an equivocal way, cackling and winking at me at the same time. They voluntered nothing more, and I drove off.

The saloon proved to be no different from many others I had been into. There was the forepart, with its imitation mahogany cigar stand and, behind it, the wall case containing bottled liquors; then came the wooden partition with its frosted glass and mirror panels and the two swinging half-doors; beyond this was the barroom, proper or improper; then another imitation mahogany partition like the first; and, finally, the "Wine Room."

There was no one in the forepart and no one in the barroom; so that, presumably, the saloon did most of its business nights. A dumb-waiter back of the bar made it evident that they served drinks to the rooms above. This fact was of special interest to me, for it showed that they really might have used a later type of register, one having a checking system, to advantage. I pushed both the swinging half-doors in front of me and stepped into the wine room.

At one of the red tables in front of me, leaning over a greasy iron frying pan, stood a swarthy young man of medium height, weighing, I judged about a hundred and sixty pounds. He was smooth-shaven and sleek. The top of his round little head was surmounted by a crest of oily, coal-black hair, the neck and lower part of his head being shaven in a line with the tips of his "cauliflower" ears. Two stubby, powerful arms emerged from his rolled-up pink shirt sleeves. In his right hand he held a two-pronged steel fork and in his left a large steel knife, with which he was slicing a thick slab of greasy steak into oozing red cubes. A gentleman who, presumably, followed the prize ring for an avocation was having a late breakfast. He kept right on at his slicing without looking about to see who had entered.

Along three walls of this wine room were a number of semi-private com-

partments, shoulder-high stalls, and in the center of the room stood numerous red tables and bent-wood red chairs. In the far end of the right wall was the "Family Entrance," which also served as the entrance, or exit, to the rooms upstairs.

When he had sliced a dozen or more of the red cubes, he shifted the fork to his left hand and the knife to his right; and, spearing first one and then another of the oozing red cubes, he opened his mouth and inserted them both, together with about two inches of the length of the steel fork into his mouth, shut his teeth and withdrew the fork. His mouth filled with red meat, he reared up and faced me—a formidable gent, who appeared well able to defend his lady at a truck drivers ball. He stood there looking directly at me and grinding his meat between his jaws, red fluid oozing out of the corners of his mouth. After some seconds, he said: "What are you after?"

I continued staring at him. Though not a lovely creature, he was, in his own way, striking. My boorish behavior did not appear to disturb him in the least, and he continued seriously at the grinding of his meat.

I saw him throw up his head to listen. A sharp, slacking sound, as of some small woman coming down wooden steps in high-heeled bed-room slippers or unlaced shoes, could be heard on the other side of the right wall. He made a lunge for the rear door in a comical sort of way, seeming to oscilate from above his waistline while rolling forward rapidly; but it was an effective mode of locomotion, and he was there instantly. There he remained, his head down, his shoulders hunched, his stubby hairy arms hanging at his sides, watching to spring and grasp as soon as the door opened.

The door opened. His left arm curved downward and up, in a hook, "Hello, Skeezicks!" he called out.

For some seconds I caught flashes of pink feet in pink satin slippers and some stifled animal sounds. Then everything became still. A woman's voice said playfully.

"Go way, you bad boy! *Ich liebe dich* —no more!"

Before me, in a single pink silk undergarment, stood Lily Barlow, her tiny mouth covered with brown pan-grease.

* * *

Society is based upon the good opinion people have of themselves—and their suspicion of each other.—*Platitudes in the Making.*

The Lost Comrade

By MARY COLES CARRINGTON

Last night, within the flying train
That cleft your moonlight silence through,
With face pressed to the cindered pane
I saw your lonely heath, and you
Bound, haply, for some rose-hung cot
Fashioned of dreams, desired, apart,
Where you might, by the world forgot,
Commune with your world-weary heart.

Wrapped in the night's calm radiance,
You scorned our din, our busy haste;
Clearly I read, in one brief glance,
Your old quick gesture of distaste,
The sudden shrug, the hand outflung
In vain entreaty to the moon
To still the jarring rails that rung
In some wild cadence, out of tune.

But I, with pulses keeping time
To harsh, primeval, steel-wrung song
Which, in hoarse tones of toil and grime,
Wheel roared to wheel, defiant, strong
Turned from your silence satisfied,
Vibrant with hope, alert to meet
Once more the strange, unquiet tide
That floods within the city street.

Eager, I fled to seek mine own;
Chill drew the mists where lone you stood—
Ah, can your alien palm have known
The steadfast clasp of brotherhood?

Affairs of Catherine

No. 1. THE GRAND DUCHESS RECEIVES *

(A PLAY IN ONE ACT)

By LOUIS GILMORE

CHARACTERS

THE GRAND DUKE PETER
THE VALET DE CHAMBRE
ELISABETH VORONZOF
THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
COUNT STANISLAS PONIATOWSKI
THE GRAND DUCHESS CATHERINE

An apartment in the suite of the Grand Duke Peter at Oranienbaum. Style, Louis Quatorze. To the right and left, double doors. In the center, at back, a door leading to the Grand Duchess' dressing room.

The period is the 6th of July, 1758.

At the rise of the curtain, the apartment is lit with wax candles and cloudy with tobacco smoke. Peter Ulric of Holstein, Grand Duke of Russia and heir to the throne, is seated at a small supper table placed in the center of the room. Although the table is set for two, the Grand Duke is having supper alone. He is smoking a long-stemmed pipe and has a glass of brandy at his elbow. The Grand Duke is thirty, but looks older. He is small, wizened and pock-marked. His Valet de Chambre is about to serve him.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Pushing him away*)

Can't eat another thing! Can't possibly do it! Only drink! Always drink—always drunk! (*Laughs uproariously.*) Did you hear that? Did you hear what I said?

THE VALET DE CHAMBRE

(*Very dignified*)

Yes, your Highness.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Correcting him.*)

Imperial Highness!

THE VALET DE CHAMBRE

Yes, your Imperial Highness.

THE GRAND DUKE

What did I say?

THE VALET DE CHAMBRE

Your Imperial Highness was pleased to observe that your Imperial Highness is always drunk.

THE GRAND DUKE

That's right. Very good. How the devil do you ever keep a straight face?

THE VALET

No one but his Imperial Highness laughs at his Imperial Highness' jokes.

THE GRAND DUKE

When I'm Czar, everybody will laugh.

THE VALET

Yes, your Imperial Highness. Anything else?

THE GRAND DUKE

Some more brandy. (*Tossing it down.*) And I'll divorce my wife and marry Betsy Voronzof... (*With a glance toward the dressing room.*) Speak of the devil!....

(*Elizabeth Romanovna Voronzof comes in from the Grand Duchess' dressing room. She is nineteen and has already begun to grow fat. Her face and arms are pock-marked.*)

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Well, here I am at last!

THE GRAND DUKE

Hello Betsy! I just said speak of the devil!

*Apply to the Author, care of The Double Dealer, for permission to act.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Entering into the spirit of the remark.*)

Did you? So I'm a devil, am I?

THE GRAND DUKE

No. Angel! Peter's darling angel—that's what Betsy is! What will my darling angel have, beer or brandy?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Brandy. (*Tasting it.*) Umm, good! (*Approaching the Grand Duke coquettishly.*) Now, give its darling angel a kiss. (*They kiss.*) And now, supper! (*Sits at her place at table and tastes the food on her plate.*) Umm, cold!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Between puffs.*)

Couldn't wait any longer. Didn't know what had become of you!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Between chews.*)

It isn't my fault if I get a cold supper. As long as I'm Maid of Honor to the Grand Duchess, I have to be present when she gets into bed.

THE GRAND DUKE

My wife just gone to bed? Scandalous!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Oh, no, there wasn't anyone else in the bed!

THE GRAND DUKE

Well, it wouldn't have been the first time!

(*The clock on the mantle strikes eleven.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Counting the strokes.*)

Eleven o'clock!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Half an hour later than usual! What with being Maid of Honor to her and darling angel to you, I'm losing my appetite!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*With a guffaw.*)

No danger of that!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Well, then, my figure!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Leaning toward her, gravely.*)

See here, Betsy! I'd sooner you lose your appetite than your honor.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

What?

THE GRAND DUKE

Your position! As long as you're Maid of Honor to my wife, it's all in the family and you and I'll be together.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

It's the only thing that makes me put up with her!

THE GRAND DUKE

What's the matter? Is she riding the high horse again?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Oh, no more than usual! (*Lowering her voice.*) Everybody says that her Imperial Highness and Count Poniatowski...

THE GRAND DUKE

What? The new Polish ambassador?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Yes. And that in Petersburg they were always together. Everybody knows about it.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Naively.*)

Everybody but me. 'Pon my honor, I haven't heard a word about it. Nobody ever tells me a thing!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

I do. And as long as Madam Catherine is living in glass houses, she isn't very likely to throw stones at you and me.

(*A knock on double door at right.*)

ELISABETH VORONZOF

What's that?

THE GRAND DUKE

Must be the Captain of the Guard. His orders were to report to me at eleven for inspection of the guard and further orders.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Inspection of the guard? At this time of the night?

THE GRAND DUKE

It's the new uniforms. Just arrived from Holstein. Couldn't wait 'till to-morrow to see 'em.

(*The Valet de Chambre opens the door for the Captain of the Guard, who steps into the room, salutes and stands at attention.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Sternly.*)

How's this, Captain? Orders were to report at eleven. It is now— (*Walks, with an attempt at steadiness, to the mantle and looks at the clock.*) It is now—one minute past eleven!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

(*Beginning a long speech.*)

Your Imperial Highness...

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Interrupting curtly.*)

Discipline is discipline, Captain! See that it doesn't happen again!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

But, your Imperial Highness...

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Raising his voice.*)

Not another word, Captain! I have just said: discipline is discipline! What would Frederick the Great say under the circumstances?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Probably the same thing, your Imperial Highness.

THE GRAND DUKE

I believe you are right. I will inspect the guard.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

But the new uniforms...

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Anxiously.*)

Didn't they come?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Yes, your Imperial Highness. But the fit— it was found necessary to make alterations.

THE GRAND DUKE

Have the alterations been made?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Not as yet...

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Exploding.*)

Gott im Himmel, make them at once!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Has your Imperial Highness any further orders?

THE GRAND DUKE

Yes. (*Scratching his head.*) Er-r, that is, no. Unless her Excellency... What do you say, Betsy? Have I any further orders?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Putting down her knife and fork.*)

Yes. Twenty-five roubles reward to the sentry who arrests anyone found in the palace grounds without a permit.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*To the Captain.*)

You hear what her Excellency says?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Yes, your Imperial Highness.

THE GRAND DUKE

Govern yourself accordingly.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

I will, your Imperial Highness. I will make the arrest myself. Has your Imperial Highness any further orders?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

If you catch anyone, bring them here.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Very good, your Excellency.

THE GRAND DUKE

I will inspect the guard at ten in the morning.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Very good, your Imperial Highness. (*He salutes and goes out.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

What's the game, Betsy? Do you expect to catch anyone?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Yes. Count Poniatowski.

THE GRAND DUKE

But do you think he comes to see her here at Oranienbaum?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Why not?

THE GRAND DUKE

The guard's orders are to admit no one without a permit from my aunt the Empress Elisabeth, or from me.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Yes, I know. But with a couple of roubles anybody can get around a sentry.

THE GRAND DUKE

A Russian sentry; but not one of my faithful Holsteiners!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

They're all alike.

THE GRAND DUKE

But Betsy, —suppose they do catch Count Poniatowski and bring him here —what'll we do?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Pretend we think he's a spy. It will be amusing. (*Pushes her chair back from the table.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

Oh, all right. (*To the Valet de Chambre.*) Clear the table and bring another bottle of brandy.

(*The Valet de Chambre places the things on a tray and goes out.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*In the meantime, walks about the room. Picking up his violin from a table.*) What do you say, Betsy? Shall I play you a tune?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

No, Don't. Think of the noise.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Replacing the violin on the table.*) Then, what'll we do?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Don't let's do anything. I'm too sleepy.

THE GRAND DUKE

We'll go to bed, soon as we have another drink.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Too sleepy to go to bed.

THE GRAND DUKE

Then, what'll we do?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Nothing.

(*The Valet de Chambre returns with a bottle of brandy.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

Well, here's the brandy! (*To the valet, who is filling their glasses.*) That'll be all. You can go to bed now. If we need anything, I'll pull the bell-rope.

THE VALET

Good night, your Imperial Highness. Good night, your Excellency. (*He bows and goes out through the double doors at the left.*)

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Tasting the brandy.*)

Um-m, good!

(*Sounds of footsteps and angry voices in the corridor. The Captain of the Guard can be heard saying: I have orders to bring you to the Grand Duke. Another voice is heard saying: I must decline the honor, though my fortune may depend upon it. I have not a moment to lose.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*In the meantime.*)

That's the Captain of the Guard!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

He's caught someone! I wouldn't be surprised if it's Count Poniatowski!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*With his hand on the door-knob.*)

I'll open the door.

(*He flings the doors open and the Captain of the Guard comes in followed reluctantly by a tall woman dressed in a domino and wearing a hat and veil.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Stepping back in astonishment.*)

Donnervetter, a woman!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Angry and astonished.*)

A woman! What is the meaning of this, Captain? You should have arrested a man, not a woman!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

How was I to know, your Excellency...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

How were you to know?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Whether it was a man or a woman.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Do you take me for a fool?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Pardon, your Excellency. But your Excellency's orders were to arrest anyone found without a permit.

THE GRAND DUKE

The Captain's right, Betsy! I remember exactly what you said.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Well, what was the woman doing?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Sitting on a bench at the foot of the stairway that leads to her Imperial Highness' bedroom.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Let's have a look at her.

(*The woman takes off her veil.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

A handsome wench! What'll we do with her? Turn her over to the Captain?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

The Captain had better search her. She may be carrying a concealed weapon.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

A wise precaution, your Excellency. (*In the midst of a vigorous search, he stops short, whistles and exclaims.*) I was right after all, your Excellency. This isn't a woman! It's a man! or the Chevalier d'Eon!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*With a ribald laugh.*)

The Chevalier d'Eon!

PONIATOWSKI

I may as well throw myself on your Imperial Highness' mercy and make a clean breast of everything... (*He removes the hat and domino. Underneath he is completely dressed as a man; very handsome, very elegant, and in the latest fashion.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

Well, what the devil are you?

PONIATOWSKI

A German tailor, come to measure a Holstein officer for a suit of clothes.

THE GRAND DUKE

You've come to the right place, if you're really a tailor. But what do you mean by getting yourself up in a domino and veil for all the world like a woman?

PONIATOWSKI

With your Imperial Highness' permission, I will explain. The hat, the veil and the domino are commissions of a lady—one of my very best customers. I was carrying her the articles in question while on my way to measure her for a riding habit.

THE GRAND DUKE

Aha! A moment ago it was to measure a Holstein officer for a suit of clothes; and now it's a lady for a riding habit!

PONIATOWSKI

The officer and lady are very close to each other, your Imperial Highness. I was going to measure them both at the same time.

THE GRAND DUKE

Both at the same time! What do you say to that, Betsy?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

The fellow is as funny as Narishkin.

PONIATOWSKI

(*With an elaborate bow.*)

Your Imperial Highness is very kind.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Surprised.*)

Imperial Highness? I'm not her Imperial Highness! I'm the Countess Voronzof.

PONIATOWSKI

A very natural mistake. (*With the gesture of a professional.*) Ah, if only I might measure your Excellency for a gown.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Waggishly.*)

What do you say, Betsy? He might measure us both at the same time!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

The fellow hasn't yet explained, your Imperial Highness, what he was doing without a permit.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Nor, for that matter, why he was carrying the lady's things to her on his own back.

PONIATOWSKI

Your Excellency, when I entered the palace grounds, they were not. They were under my arm—in a bandbox. As for my permit, I could have sworn that was in my pocket! No sooner had I entered the palace grounds, than I put down the bandbox and felt in the inner right-hand pocket of my coat for my permit. Imagine my consternation! It was gone! (*With a bow to the Grand Duke.*) Knowing the discipline that obtains among his Imperial Highness' Guard, I was about to turn back. Suddenly, it occurred to me, that with the things in the bandbox, I might be able to disguise myself as a lady of the palace—which would explain my not having a permit. In another moment, and scarcely realizing what I was doing, I had opened the bandbox and put on the domino, hat and veil—in short, the costume in which I appeared before your Imperial Highness and your Excellency a moment before.

THE GRAND DUKE

If there's anything he hasn't explained, I can't think of it. What do you say, Betsy?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Ask him the lady and officer's names.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Peremptorily.*)

You hear what her Excellency says? Why don't you answer?

PONIATOWSKI

(*Not knowing what to say.*)

Sir, I am not at liberty...

THE GRAND DUKE

Not at liberty! I should say you are not! And what's more, you won't be, until you tell us their names!

PONIATOWSKI

But, your Imperial Highness, I have completely forgotten them. I have a very poor head for names.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Coaxingly.*)

You can't have forgotten the names of two such excellent customers! I'm dying of curiosity. You'll forget your own name in a minute...

PONIATOWSKI

(*With sudden inspiration.*)

Madam, I have already!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

What?

PONIATOWSKI

I have forgotten my own name! It is a disease to which I am subject. Fortunately, I remember the name of the disease—aphasia.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Aphasia? I never heard of such a disease!

PONIATOWSKI

It's a new disease, your Excellency.

THE GRAND DUKE

Is it catching?

PONIATOWSKI

Extremely so! As long as I am in the room, your Imperial Highness is in danger of catching it.

THE GRAND DUKE

What do you say, Betsy? Of course, we've both had the small pox. But all the same, we'd better not take any chances...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

I know of a cure for it.

THE GRAND DUKE

Do you really?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Yes. Give this fellow a hundred strokes of the knout. I promise you it will either cure the disease or kill the patient.

PONIATOWSKI

(*Alarmed.*)

The cure is worse than the disease, your Excellency.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Ah, I thought so. He is beginning to recover already. Tell us their names.

PONIATOWSKI

I really can't think of them.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Why are we waiting? Captain, let the fellow be given a hundred strokes of the knout.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*To the Captain of the Guard, who hesitates.*)

Do as her Excellency says.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

(*Drawing his sabre and motioning to Poniatowski to precede him.*)

Move!

PONIATOWSKI

(*Thoroughly alarmed, knowing that after all Russia is a barbarous country.*)

Your Imperial Highness does not dare?

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Drawing himself up.*)

I? Dare?

PONIATOWSKI

To subject the ambassador of his Majesty, the King of Poland, to such an indignity!

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Enjoying the situation.*)

Oho, so you're Count Poniatowski?

PONIATOWSKI

I am.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*With a complete change of tone.*)

What a fool you were not to take me into your confidence in time! It would have saved all this fuss. (*To the Captain of the Guard*) You needn't wait.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

(*Holding out his hand.*)

Your Imperial Highness, the twenty-five roubles reward...

THE GRAND DUKE

Oh yes, of course. (*To Poniatowski*) My friend, do you happen to have twenty-five roubles about you?

PONIATOWSKI

(*Feeling in his pockets.*)

I regret to say that I have only twelve roubles left. But everything that I have is at your Imperial Highness' disposal.

THE GRAND DUKE

The twelve roubles will be all for the present. (*Takes them and gives them to the Captain of the Guard.*) I'll give you the rest some other time.

(*The Captain of the Guard salutes and goes out.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Genially.*)

If you had only told me that you had come to see the Grand Duchess...

PONIATOWSKI

(*Surprised.*)

Sir, I don't understand...

THE GRAND DUKE

See here, Count, I wasn't born yesterday. In another minute you'll try to make me believe you came out to Oranienbaum to look at the scenery. (*Laughs, and without giving him time to protest.*) If you want supper, pull the bell-rope.

PONIATOWSKI

Sir, I have already had supper. (*Bows formally and sits, as soon as the Grand Duke is seated.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

Well, when a man isn't hungry, he's thirsty. Help yourself to the brandy and pass the bottle to Betsy and me.

PONIATOWSKI

Thanks, your Imperial Highness. (*He fills three glasses and passes two of them. Then, lifting his own*) To your Imperial Highness' health! (*They all drink.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Proposing a toast.*)

To the health of the Ambassador of his Majesty, the King of Poland. (*They all drink.*) And now, Count, I suppose you're worried about keeping the Grand Duchess waiting?

PONIATOWSKI

Sir, I protest...

THE GRAND DUKE

Never mind, Count. There's no harm done, as long as it's all in the family. Now that we are good friends, there's someone wanting. (*He gets up and walks out of the room into the Grand Duchess' dressing room.*)

PONIATOWSKI

(*Turning to Elisabeth Voronzof anxiously.*)

Has your Excellency any idea as to his Imperial Highness' intention?...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

He's gone to fetch her Imperial Highness.

PONIATOWSKI

(*Amazed.*)

Surely, the Grand Duke doesn't carry a joke that far...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

A joke? I don't see the point!

PONIATOWSKI

Waking the Grand Duchess when she's sound asleep!

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Sound asleep! What woman is ever sound asleep when she's expecting a lover?

PONIATOWSKI

Surely, you don't for an instant suppose...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Lucidly.*)

Well, you see—it isn't as if you were the first one..

PONIATOWSKI

Do you mean to say?...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Before your Excellency, there was Count Saltikof. And before Saltikof—everybody says that Lieutenant Tchernicheff...

PONIATOWSKI

(*With a shrug of the shoulders.*)

Oh, what everybody says!...

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Well, as for Tchernicheff, I can't say for certain, as I wasn't Maid of Honor to her Imperial Highness at the time. (*With a glance toward the dressing room.*) Ah, here they are now!

(*The Grand Duke comes in leading the Grand Duchess Catherine by the hand. She has on a dressing gown trimmed with lace and fur and her bare feet have been stuck into bedroom slippers. The future Catherine II is now in her twenty-ninth year. This is how, some years later, Poniatowsky describes his recollection of her. "With her black hair, she had a dazzling whiteness of skin, a vivid color, large blue eyes, prominent and eloquent, black and long eyebrows, a Greek nose, a mouth that looked made for kissing, perfect hands and feet, a slight figure, tall rather than short, a carriage that was lively yet full of nobility, a pleasing voice, and a merry laugh." Some allowance may be made for the enthusiasm natural in a lover.*)

THE GRAND DUKE

(*With a gesture toward Poniatowski.*)

Well, here he is! I hope you are all content with me.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*Surprised.*)

He! Do you mean Count Poniatowski?

THE GRAND DUKE

You needn't stand on ceremony with each other, my dear. Count Poniatowski and I are friends; and as long as you don't object to Betsy and me...

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*With a charming smile.*)

I hope the Ambassador of his Majesty, the King of Poland, is content with my receiving him in my dressing gown. Petrushka, here, insisted on bringing me without giving me time to dress.

PONIATOWSKI

Permit me to say that her Imperial Highness has no need of dress.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*Archly.*)

What? You would have me naked?

PONIATOWSKI

No. Not naked, your Imperial Highness—but in beauty unadorned, adorned the most.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*Extending her hand to him to be kissed.*)

Courtier!

PONIATOWSKI

(*Kisses it.*)

Your Imperial Highness will set a new fashion.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*With mock gravity.*)

No. I could never make it the fashion here in Russia. The climate is too cold.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Count Poniatowski was afraid that your Imperial Highness would resent being waked out of a sound sleep.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

A sound sleep! I wasn't asleep. I had a headache, so I took Mahomet to bed with me.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Startled.*)

Mahomet!

THE GRAND DUCHESS

A tragedy of Voltaire. What did you think? Did you think it was the Grand Turk?

ELISABETH VORONZOF

Your Imperial Highness is merry.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

Why not? (*With a glance at Poniatowski.*) I no longer have a headache.

THE GRAND DUKE

(*Doing the honors.*)

Let's all sit down and have supper. I'll pull the bell rope.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*Quickly.*)

No. Let's all go to bed.

ELISABETH VORONZOF

(*Nodding.*)

Too sleepy to go to bed...

THE GRAND DUKE

Well, I hope you are all content with me?

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*Putting her hand on his shoulder.*)

Petruskha darling, we only want a letter from you to Betsy's uncle, Vice-Chancellor Voronzof, asking him to bring about a speedy return of our friend from Warsaw.

PONIATOWSKI

My position at St. Petersburg, your Imperial Highness, is a little thorny, owing to the strained relations between Russia and Poland.

THE GRAND DUKE

I will write the letter at once. (*To the Grand Duchess.*) My dear, you must tell me what to say.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

I will. As soon as you come back. You'll find ink, paper and quill on my writing table.

(*The Grand Duke goes into the dressing room.*)

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*In a half-whisper.*)

Stanislas, you may give me a kiss.

PONIATOWSKI

(*Taking her in his arms.*)

What, my heroine, only one?

THE GRAND DUCHESS

(*With a glance at Betsy.*)

Sssh... No woman is a heroine to her Maid of Honor.

PONIATOWSKI

(*Smilingly.*)

Your Highness' Maid of Honor is half asleep.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

When she's entirely asleep—you may give me more than one.

(*They kiss.*)

CURTAIN

Idolators

By WILBUR LAURENCE NEEDHAM

"WHAT spirited drawing! What handling of color and composition! Notice that velvety, wine-tinted mantle, enfolding her shoulder with a suggestion of the pure perfection underneath! The brown hair across the swell of her breast, in a shimmering wave which no sunlight needs to accentuate; the tilt of her profile, half toward the stars and half melting into the shadows of the canvas, like a caress. And the faint blush in her cheeks. Ah, Morton, originality alone is not art. Jacquet may not have been as original as some of our futurists; but I often think their sort of originality is only a pose to cover up a lack of real, vital talent. It is so much more difficult to faithfully interpret the natural than to distort it in haphazard, unbeautiful fashion."

"I agree with you. Most futuristic work might well be accidental, for all we know—the very origin of it, indeed, may have been a slip of the brush or two; the artist, standing back, sees a blurred, awkward figure staring out to laugh at Art. As for the rest; sheer naked amateurishness! A child has done it better on his slate at school."

Hammesfahr nodded at the younger man's words, his gray hair slipping over a thoughtful temple with the gesture. "And yet, here's Jean Gustave Jacquet unnoticed by the dogmatized student of art, and there's Paul Gauguin slavishly copied in all his childishness. If it weren't so pitiful, it would be laughable!"

"And this 'Young Woman,' with that sweet, patient expression fondling her lips and blue eyes; I wonder who posed for her?" Morton spoke his youth; and Hammesfahr smiled his age.

"I don't know, Morton; I am not a deep enough student. But this girl was very dear to him, I think, to put such fire and feeling into his brush."

"Surely... It's too bad such artists and such women must die. It is terrible that they are made to offer their art and their beauty to the earth at last, never to be seen again in the flesh."

"Of course. But so must all of us, giving place to others that the world may renew itself and go forward. And, my boy, you will find the world very much resigned to the order of things when comes the turn for you or for one you love."

"I suppose so—but, Mr. Hammesfahr, there would never be such resignation in *me*, if I loved the 'Young Woman'. She should always be the same to me, regardless of her age and no matter how faded the beauty I worshipped in her youth!"

Hammesfahr smiled indulgently. "I know. But to your children? Your descendants?"

"Would they not worship her as I did? As I do Jacquet's lovely painting?"

"I doubt it."

"Why?"

"Nature, that's all. From dust to dust—many millions. And there shall be others... No; you can't stop the

moving hand, nor erase its cruelties. Only by immortality, and that is not given to many. The Empress Josephine was beautiful, and she is remembered. But I once knew a little girl who was even more beautiful—and purer, I know. She is forgotten by the world, save where the world knew her."

Hammesfahr's voice was very tender, now, and Morton saw his thoughts... Mary Alice. Long auburn-brunette curls; a pensively spiritual face; soft, deep eyes of pleading, unfathomable brown; a voice that crept into your heart and entangled it forever. Oh, he knew her. And so might Hammesfahr, if he would only forget that other and look. *His* Mary Alice was dead these many years, with a smile on her lips as in life, and a wreath of white hair falling about her face. But the Mary Alice whom Morton loved was living again her mother's life, if in another age... Hammesfahr was blind not to see. She had been wonderful, yes; but she'd grown old, and her time had come... And Mary Alice, she of the auburn-splashed hair and the beating pulse, and the quick, responsive smile: she from the womb of that other? Morton told himself that he should never be able to philosophically accept—never—the passing of this little girl of a thousand charms. Why, then, should his children—and hers?

Each to his vision, living and dead; each to his blindness, Youth and Age. Thus Aucassin and Nicolette: thus Frank and Hazel... But Hammesfahr? He looked forward for Morton, and back for himself. That was all. For him there was no present. When, indeed, has there ever been a present for Age or a past and future for Youth?

The Nickerson Room of the Chicago Art Institute enveloped the dreamers again; and the Frenchman's exquisite little canvas hung shyly before them, face half averted, eyes tender, color radiating from every delicate stroke of Jacquet's genius-stained brush.

"Beauty!" whispered Morton; and "Beauty!" echoed Hammesfahr. And each had his dream; and each sighed over a passing—done and to come—of that dream; and neither of them knew that it was immortal.

* * *

Measure

By BABETTE DEUTSCH

Evening has loosed her tides upon my breast.
The metal moon, it will not let me rest.
Yet are the ponderous stars a weight more light
Than your still breathing near me in the night.

The Passing of James Branch Cabell

By VINCENT STARRETT

I COME at once to bury Caesar and to praise him.

With a delightful and ironic gesture of farewell, Cabell has announced his own passing... "for oblivion has its merits, to which I now direct a brightening eye." Rather violently, he pushes through the swinging doors so that, with the appearance of accident, they rush back and take his latest and most distinguished detractors across the bridge of the nose. "Vale!" his voice sounds mockingly from the other side; and outside in the fierce light of contemporary journalism stand those who waved him determined farewell, looking, it must be admitted, a bit bewildered and foolish.

I had not read this delicious trifle when I contemplated my own *Hic jacet,* and a tardy perusal reveals that I have been anticipated in a number of observations; undismayed, I shall go forward with those fragments of my program that are left me.

It is perfectly obvious, of course, that Cabell does not for a moment believe in his own report of Cabell's passing. But the fact is, in an important sense Cabell *is* dead. Sorrowfully I say it; yet paradoxically am I reconciled and even happy. Whether his death may be attributed to natural causes or to the "assassinatory labors" of his critics need not concern us at this time. He is dead. In spite of the satirical gayety of his *ante-mortem* statement, I choose to accept the report as authentic for reasons which I shall set forth at length and with what perspicacity is given me. If the case is not precisely as I state it, certainly it ought to be, for art and tradition demand it.

Like Arthur Machen, his one contemporary in the curious field in which his finest work has been done, Cabell had a task to perform; like Machen, he has performed it, and now retires. The rest may not be silence; but the great books are written. Already, Cabell "belongs to the ages."

Cabell's march toward the heights began with his first published short story, indeed with his first unpublished manuscript; it ended triumphantly upon his objective pinnacle with the ill-fated "Jurgen." "Figures of Earth" is admirable, but, in the light of "Jurgen," apochryphal, as will be regarded all future writings from Dumbarton Grange; it marks the first downward step on the other side of the mountain. Because it is the first, it is still well toward the summit, and will remain one of the first half dozen of Cabell's works. Properly, it immediately should have preceded "Jurgen," the book with which the master "peaked," to use the language of mortality statistics. I think there will not be too many to follow; Cabell is too much the complete artist to permit dilution of his reputation To continue, he must in large measure re-write himself, and this, I fancy, he is unwilling to do.

The great books are "The Cream of the Jest," "Beyond Life," and "Jurgen." Not too far below stand "Figures of

Earth," "The Cords of Vanity," and "The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck," a magnificent second line of defense. And the lesser writings are only lesser because they are not the equal of those named.

The question I set myself to answer before setting down these impertinent and oracular *dicta,* was (I suppose *is*): Would Cabell have gone farther had not "Jurgen" been suppressed? I decided that he would not. What further might he have done? In "Jurgen" he has given the world a book to stand with the literary bibles of the ages. At what conceivable peak might he have aimed his sandals, after "Jurgen"? That was the situation as I saw it, a situation perhaps born of my own violent affection for "Jurgen." There is a limit (I said) even to the genius of a Cabell. Somewhere genius must reach the end of its journey, granting that itself may not recognize that point when attained, and that its performance never can equal the splendor and perfection of its dream —the truth of the latter proposition being responsible for the former. "Jurgen," then, in my opinion, stands with the supreme works of literature; to surpass its performance Cabell would have to achieve something greater than the greatest; and such is my thought of "Pantagruel" and "Pickwick" and "Don Quixote" and "The Queen Pedauque," and a scant handful of others, that I refused to believe the phenomenon possible. This, of course, is reckless and dogmatic; but no matter.

Cabell, therefore, is dead, and while I am sorry, yet am I glad, for the great works are written; we shall always have them; nothing can take them from us or from those who are to come after us. I am glad that they were written in my day, and by an American—not, heaven knows, for patriotic reasons; but because the miracle has happened in a country where literature of the sort is sadly needed, and where, perhaps of all nations, it seemed less likely that it immediately could happen. Cabell will write other books, and they will be good books "for one so dead"; he will re-write his earlier books, and may conceivably spoil some of them; but he will never injure his greater fame, for he is too fine an artist. It may be that some day he will approximate "Jurgen" (for in what other direction can he turn? He can not write of Winesburg, Ohio), and give us a posthumous child of the glorious and disreputable pawnbroker; and certainly I believe we shall have further fine tales of the "Gallantry" and "Domnei" persuasion; but at his height he will no more than rewrite "Jurgen" with a new carbon in his typewriter.

And so I await the resurrection, hoping that I am wrong.

No other writer of modern times has been in turn so neglected, so bepraised and so bespattered. For twenty years, not all of them apprentice years, he was ignored; suddenly he was discovered and exalted; last week he was villified and condemned. Now, being dead, his apotheosis begins, or, at any rate, is resumed at the point where the kindly office was interrupted by the "bubble-prickers." He has been called many things. Mr. R. M. Lovett, not unkindly, would have him a "decadent realist"; but he is not decadent, and certainly he is not a realist in the ordinary meaning

of that abused word. Mr. Hewlett, most unkindly, would have him a pretentious charlatan, and a charlatan is the one thing he is not, even if we grant all the rest. Mr. Le Gallienne would have him insincere, and finds that "Jurgen," "The Cords of Vanity" and "The Soul of Melicent" (*Domnei*), "are as little animated by any least particle of himself as—any of his writings"; yet Mr. Lovett discovers that "throughout all he has remained himself." Mr. Le Gallienne, again, finds him lewd; but Mr. Rascoe vigorously asserts the contrary. Into at least one of Cabell's tales, Mr. Markham reads a pious moral; but to Mr. Mencken Cabell is a genial pessimist, an exhilarating skeptic, and quite the last fellow to point a moral. It is this last-named notion, surely, that is responsible in large measure for Mr. Mencken's enthusiastic acceptance of Cabell—one of the most astonishing episodes in contemporaneous criticism. But it is perfectly clear from the foregoing, and a great deal more that might be cited to the same effect, that any person may read into Cabell whatever he chooses to read, may look for anything he would like to find and be reasonably certain of finding it. This in itself is significant.

Two appreciators have come close to the truth: Mr. Hugh Walpole and Mr. Wilson Follett. Mr. Follett's opinion has been frequently quoted, but may be quoted again: "He (Cabell) is a realist of the realities which have nothing to say to fashion and change, and his momentary function among us is to reconstitute that higher realism which is the only true romance." And Mr. Walpole discovers that Cabell is "engaged in the history of the human soul... His books are simply varying chapters of the "Wandering Jew"... behind the ephemeral body the features of the longing, searching, questing soul are the same."

Cabell has discovered, or re-discovered, the admirable doctrine (the economic theory of literature, he calls it) that fine literature must, in effect, be an allegory and not the careful history of particular persons. Thus, often, we glimpse his mysteries through a glass, darkly; his characters in romance have the semblance of shadows within a dream, beckoning and curiously beguiling and always vaguely familiar; his truths flash suddenly upon us, often in retrospect, like the tardy recollection of a half-remembered face in a crowd; and their sum is the sum of reality, sketched with dainty malice in mediaeval colors. The procession of life pours past as we stand at the curb, a grotesque masquerade, a sixteenth century pageant, pennons flying and trumpets singing, quarreling men and weeping women, whispering lovers and boisterous blades, politic friars and haggard kings; but the faces of the company are our own, smirking, wailing, loving, longing...

But the denounced gospel of James Branch Cabell most clearly is set forth in his own testaments. "Beyond Life" is studded with revealing texts... "Man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams"; "it is by the grace of romance that man has been exalted above the other animals"; "in youth all men that live have been converts, if but in transitory allegiance, to that religion of the world's youth, to the creed of *domnei*, or woman-worship"; "Art must deal with contemporary life by means of

symbols"; and, finally... "To what does the whole business tend?—why, how in heaven's name should I know? We can but be content to note that all goes forward, toward something... It may be that we are nocturnal creatures perturbed by rumors of a dawn which comes inevitably, as prologues to a day wherein we and our children have no part whatever. It may be that when our arboreal propositus descended from his palm tree and began to walk upright about the earth, his progeny were forthwith committed to a journey in which today is only a way-station. Yet I prefer to take it that we are components of an unfinished world, and that we are but as seething atoms which ferment toward its making, if merely because man as he now exists can hardly be the finished product of any Creator whom one could very heartily revere. We are being made into something quite unpredictable, I imagine; and through the purging and the smelting, we are sustained by an instinctive knowledge that we are being made into something better. For this we know, quite incommunicably, and yet as surely as we know that we will to have it thus. And it is this will that stirs in us to have the creatures of earth and the affairs of earth, not as they are, but "as they ought to be," which we call romance. But when we note how visibly it sways all life we perceive that we are talking about God."

In "The Cream of the Jest," we find this: "It is only by preserving faith in human dreams that we may, after all, perhaps some day make them come true." And there is Horvendile's declaration at Storisende (*ibid*) that we dreamers hunger for we know not what, and for the exercise of powers we know that we possess, without knowing what they are. These are all clews to the Cabell *mystery*, and there are some hundreds of others in the thirteen volumes which Cabell's eternal figure, not too carefully disguised, pursues his way adown the centuries. Oh, there are plenty of clews; and you and I, who are the readers, with Cabell the writer, and his central figure, who is all of us put together, must run them down or ever the mystery is solved. Do you remember the mad detective chase in Chesterton's gigantic conception, "The Man Who Was Thursday"? In a sense, Cabell's tales are all detective stories of that sort, and if the quarry be not God, under whatever name, I have misread the allegory, for so, indeed, in a passage I already have quoted, it is explicitly stated... The eternal Quest!

Or will you say that "Beauty" is the word? Cabell, of course, will not quarrel with you if you do. He offers you a clue in those curious hieroglyphics which are the frontispiece to "The Cream of the Jest," and which, turned upside down, present the following clarifying legend:

"James Branch Cabell made this book so that he who will may read the story of man's eternally unsatisfied hunger in search of beauty. Ettarre stays inaccessible always and her loveliness is his to look on only in his dreams. All men she must evade at the last and many are the ways of her elusion."

But "beauty" is a comprehensive word... and the solution is still far to seek, even after we have glimpsed it. *Jurgen* looked upon strange scenes; his

opportunities were many; but he returned at length to his home and his wife, still wondering, still doubtful, and vaguely satisfied with things as they were. Kennaston in "The Cream of the Jest," also played at detective; and, near the end, the author says: "The Wardens of Earth sometimes unbar strange windows, I suspect—windows which face on other worlds than ours; and they permit this or that man to peer out fleetingly, perhaps, just for the joke's sake; since always they humorously contrive matters so this man shall never be able to convince his fellows of what he has seen, or of the fact that he has been granted any peep at all." The parable, it is apparent, is constructed on the Hans Christian Andersen formula; if you insist upon a moral, you must sense it; it is not set down in explicit black and white; and when you have discovered it, perhaps it is not the right moral; but still...

This is the essence of Cabell's skepticism.

Romantic ironist? Perverse allegorist? Skeptic, mountebank, dreamer? What would you! Is it not enough to understand without understanding? Certainly Cabell is a supreme ironist, and he is also a tender poet. Disillusioned, yes; Cabell is disillusioned; but he is the victim of a greater illusion than any he has lost. Will you call him an anachronism, or the prophet of a new renaissance? Perhaps that does not matter either; probably he is neither the one nor the other, but one of those lonely, occasional figures who, in one guise or another, by sorcery or by satire, offer the world a new meaning of Ecstasy, a new clew to Mystery, and then pass on. Of these, each has his converts and disciples, and... "we must be content to note that all goes forward, toward something..."

But it must be clear that this denounced gospel of Cabell's is not so perverse and monstrous a thing as those who have failed to read him would have you believe. There is, of course, "Jurgen," that disreputable pawnbroker; he was suppressed in covers; but you are *Jurgen,* and you would fiercely resent, and very properly so, the suppression of yourself. You are immoral, and therefore *Jurgen* is immoral; but if you are not, *Jurgen* is not... Cabell discovers his symbols in curious places, and his interpretations may startle, but they are part of revelation. If naturalism is art in "L'Assomoir" and in "Maggie," it is trebly so in its glorified and interpreted manifestations in "Jurgen." There is, of course, no answer to the determined and illiterate attitude that cries "depravity" in the teeth of *Jurgen's* robustious and healthy adventure; no answer other, at least, than that of Baudelaire to the shocked bleatings of those who were dismayed by accounts (largely false) of Poe's personal "depravity"— "What then?" asked the Frenchman, with a shrug. In such fashion, I reply to those who recount, not without gusto, the several infamies of *Jurgen.*

The chiefest difficulty of the critic would seem to be in distinguishing between the utterances of the author and the utterances of one of the author's puppets. But the "hero" of the piece may be no less the author himself than the "villain," granting that both are Cabell, or whom you will. Mr. Le Gallienne errs here; to show that Cabell is something of a cad, he quotes the epi-

sode of Elena Barry-Smith in "The Cords of Vanity," at the conclusion of which the composite hero-villain, Townsend, having languidly insulted the lady of his immediate *affaire*, is ordered from the premises...

"Get out of my house!" Elena said, quite splendid in her fury, "or I will have you horsewhipped. I was fond of you. You would not let me be in peace. And I didn't know you until tonight for the sneering, stuck-up dirty beast you are at heart—" She came nearer, and her glittering eyes narrowed. "And you have no hold on me, no letters to blackmail me with, and nobody anywhere would take your word for anything against mine. You would only be whipped by some real man, and probably shot. So do you remember to keep a watch upon that lying, sneering mouth of yours! And do you get out of my house!"

But Cabell wrote the lines I have just quoted quite as much as what had gone before. Is he any less Elena Barry-Smith than Robert Townsend? Is he not, as a matter of fact, simply the omniscient and thoroughly capable author whose genius has given him understanding of the minds and souls of all his book people, the "good" and the "bad" alike? Indeed, is it not the very proof of this genius that the caddishness of the temperamental Townsend is able to infuriate Mr. Le Gallienne? No, "The Cords of Vanity" is an important chapter in Cabell's "history of the human soul," which is not to say that Townsend is not frequently a cad, for he is philanderer, libertine and cad, and, by the same token, not an unfamiliar figure in life. As a study of what is popularly called "the artistic temperament," the book is infinitely more revealing than "Dorian Gray," because it is far less an imaginary biography than Wilde's opus. In "The Cords of Vanity," too, I find a fine flavor of the picaresque romances of earlier days; there is, artistically, a joyous rascality, a large unscrupulousness, about Townsend that is almost epic; for all his weaknesses, or because of them, he is a most likeable scoundrel. One may enjoy reading about him without wishing him for an intimate. The several Cervantesque qualities I find in this book also are found in "The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck," with other signs of the Spaniard's thought and manner.

If in the two books I have just mentioned, and in "The Eagle's Shadow," Cabell's three "modern novels," the author seems somewhat less at ease than in his "mediaeval stories," to divide the bibliography into its superficial groups, it is because he is largely unconcerned with matters of immediate and topical interest, save as they relate to those "realities which have nothing to say to fashion and change." Indeed, Cabell's Economic theory, as set forth in "Beyond Life," in part asserts that first-class art does not reproduce its contemporary background, and the dictum—while I, for one, do not subscribe to it without reservation—may be accepted as the author's own criticism of his "modern novels." Cabell prefers the glamor of old days, the colored perspective, and an atmosphere unbreathed of human lungs, to paraphrase a line of his own; the mythologies of all lands and times fascinate and delight him, and when they are insufficient to his purpose he invents his own mythology. All to considerable purpose.

In every writing he seems at once seeker and interpreter; himself groping toward glamor... perfection... himself revealing his discoveries as they are made. Scorner and satirist of theology, yet not quite the complete skeptic; a whimsical pessimist, a fantastic doubter, and completely the victim of a dream that no disillusion can overcome... A watcher of the skies. Although not quite his greatest book, "The Cream of the Jest" is the perfect revelation of James Branch Cabell; of yourself and myself, and of all of us who do not contract from our associates our opinions and beliefs as if they were the measles.

I have said that one reads what one will into Cabell, and it may be that I am doing just that; but if so, I find what I seek because it is there.

A detailed review of his books is beside the point; that is not the purpose of this paper, which, it is to be remembered, is in the nature of a memorial. "Our sole concern with the long-dead is aesthetic," he himself has written, and if Cabell's death is of recent occurrence, no matter; I shall anticipate posterity: aesthetic consideration of his books requires only an emotional understanding of their sum... "Off-hand," began John Charteris, "I would say that books are best insured against oblivion through practice of the auctorial virtues of distinction and clarity, of beauty and symmetry, of tenderness and truth and urbanity..." If this be true (*vide Beyond Life*), are not the books of James Branch Cabell insured against oblivion?

Mr. Mencken's recent fulminations against the south, I believe, were uncalled for and undeserved, although his praise of Cabell is fulsome and deserved. Would he have "the Sahara of the Bozart" as prolific a breeding-ground of mediocrity as the north? "The south begins to mutter," he says, with jovial, oracular patronage, although his own ominous murmur for some years has been heard across the land... But if the desert bloom only once in a century and bring forth a Poe or a Cabell—or, indeed, a Mencken—it should be cause for rejoicing. Let us be thankful for the jungle and sand and the hot, bare middle years, while with eagerness we await the next phenomenon. Poe and Cabell are almost the two most distinguished figures in American literature. Is it significant that both are—were—southerners? And is not no literature preferable to the oceans of toilet water literature manufactured in the north?

In the case of Cabell, claquery has been cried by the "bubble-prickers"; but that is patently absurd when it is recalled that for twenty years he was unappreciated and obscure. After a score of years, a comparatively few intelligent readers and critics forced Cabell's contemporaneous fame, over the tumultuous log-rolling of hacks and fools for lesser men. Now the reaction, dating from the "Jurgen" episode, and the air is filled with tiny gloatings. Little critics, obscenely writhing, wrathfully contemplate the astounding phenomenon of genius... amoebas fearfully concerned with the mechanism of an airplane...

The situation is not without precedent in history. The eclipse is partial and temporary. "Our moral prejudices fail to traverse the corridors of time."

Old Satan

By ALICE CORBIN

Old Mooney-eyed Satan
Away from me!
O drive old Satan
Away from me!
Old Mooney-eyed Satan
Away from me!
O drive old Satan
AWAY!

Somebody's going to die today,
And the Devil will stand beside the bed,
And a tall white Angel on the other side
Dispute with him for the dead.

'Twas so when your Aunt Mary died—
She saw old Satan stand
With crimson garment and hornéd head,
And she cried to the Lord to take her hand!

She turned her back on the Devil there,
She said, "O Lord, I have served thee well!"
And the Devil scrooged and turned away,
And ran straight back to Hell!

Somebody's going to die today—
It may be you, and it may be me,
But nobody knows who it will be,
So pray to the Lord to keep you free!

Old Mooney-eyed Satan
Away from me!
O drive old Satan
Away from me!
Old Mooney-eyed Satan
Away from me!
O drive old Satan
AWAY!

The Ivory Tower

By EDITH CHAPMAN

"SO that's your philosophy?"

The question was rather a statement and the voicing of it hardly broke the silence. It fused into the prevailing atmosphere of half-tones which were the note of this room,—of the neutral tinted walls and hangings, the infrequent projectures of old furniture, as much as of the man who presided over it, and who was sitting now, opening and closing with such unconscious precision his brown, slender hand. This same nervous hand had doubtless reached out and stripped away, piece by piece, every excess of ornament, leaving only the mellow tonelessness out of which the faded prints, a portrait, a rich old rug or two seemed not so much to emerge as to ripen with contour the dimness of the shadows. The place had about it something of the perspective that one finds in the retreating backgrounds of certain Japanese prints. What were the books, one wondered, lined up in the open cases? What was that vase like, which lifted a chill curve or two out of the darkness?

Hargrave thus extravagantly speculated as he felt the spirit of the room not for the first time affecting him. Or was it the spirit of the man who had created it? They seemed hardly separable. In these confining limits the latter spent the greater part of his time, and here were accomplished those miracles of prose which testifed to his violently active mental life. This was the only activity, apparently, of which he was capable. He existed only as an artist. How could he know so much, Hargrave had often asked himself, know it with such acuteness of discernment, and still live so little? It was not that Dalton was didactic even in his asceticism. He accepted the invitations of his friends; he invaded their houses, but he passed in and out always an onlooker; observing, never mingling. About him there seemed to remain nothing of the personal. He had poured it all into his creative capacities.

Looking at him attentively—the slight languid figure, and the pale face in which the eyes presided as mind over matter—Hargrave repeated his question. "So that's your philosophy?"

"That there is no reality? Yes, I suppose so." The other shifted, not nervously, but as if to adjust his body more firmly to the process of thinking. "Isn't *reality* merely an arbitrary term? Does there exist for any of us more than our personal consciousness? Isn't our entire experience, I mean, simply the break and mend of its surface?"

Hargrave seemed to have no answer ready.

The writer leaned back in his chair, whimsically irritable, almost querulous. "Why should we seek to imprison everything in nets of our physical sense. The child reacts that way, who tests out something by putting it in his mouth." He pressed his next point with some heat. "If I lean forward and seize a thing, do I arrive any nearer to a perception of it? Quite the reverse. I im-

poverish it, even for my senses. I deprive it of its relational values." He pointed to a black Chinese vase holding a single, ivory-colored rose. "For example that. What do you make of it from where you sit? I get a series of impressions. The contrast of color, black with white, and the consequent multiplying of the tonal values of each. That uninterrupted curve which one can trace from the rim of the farthest petal along the stem to the slender base of the glass. Those charming ochre tints which the lamplight gives to the petals most in shadow, the luminous transparence of the others. . . If you take the thing, you assure yourself that the vase is porcelain, the flower some veinous, pulpy substance from which has been lost the fancied texture, the fancied throb of color. You have turned it into something utterly sordid; and all because you were ruthless to break past the barriers of perspective."

Hargrave soberly listened. "And would you apply everywhere your principle of—abeyance?"

"Oh—everywhere?"

There was another long pause before Hargrave, with some constraint, pushed his next question. "What about love? Another ignis fatuus?"

"Most of all I imagine. Because of the intolerable disfigurement. That, I mean, of hacking an ideal down to practical terms."

Whereupon the other struck out an impatient hand. "Have you ever been in love?"

"Yes." Dalton pushed the table away. He seemed to require more space; his bodily tension quickened; his langour left him, and in the deepened pallor of his face his eyes suddenly flared. "Would you care to hear?"

Hargrave nodded. He was more eager than he would have acknowledged to know something of this man whom —for all their long intimacy—he had never seen without that winsome but impenetrable reserve which rendered him inscrutable.

Dalton began his narrative. "About ten years ago I was spending a winter in Petrograd. One of the houses where I spent a good deal of time was that of Madame Kousnitsova. I was one of her great admirers. She is perhaps the only really distinguished woman I have ever known. She was at that time almost seventy. I suppose she is dead by now. . . During the entire period of my stay in Petrograd I never missed her evenings when I could avoid it . . . One night I came in rather late, and found a large party, with music going on. One heard a good deal of music at this house, particularly of the contemporary school. My friend was very fond of it. On this night it was Scriabine's *Prometheus.* I settled down quietly next to a thin, sallow man whom I had never seen before but whom I learned afterward was the father of the illustrious composer R. I hadn't been there long when I became conscious of something outside of the music which was giving me pleasure. At first this delicious sensation was very vague. But finally I perceived that what I had probably been staring at for several moments was—a woman's hand. . . The owner was sitting about a third down the length of the room from me, her head averted, her slight figure blurred by the slack, dark gown she wore, and further concealed by the projectures of the chair in which she sat.

I had, however, an unobstructed view of her right hand which lay, with the fascinating violence of white on black, along her slender, velvet-gowned knee. I had never seen such a hand! It was morbidly slender hardly broadening from the wrist, and the fingers were long and, limp like the straight but petalled fingers of a Botticelli. They were without jewels. There was nothing from the stem of the wrist where it parted with the sleeve, to the farthest fingertip to interrupt that sculptural perfection which raised it somehow out of the realm of the living and gave it a quality of an *objet-d'art*. For a long time I simply stared at it. I seemed to have no curiosity about the girl herself. She was young, scarcely more than a child. I could see that much from where I sat. She was sitting utterly motionless and yet in what seemed an actual tremor of attention. Her hand conveyed the same impression. The long, still fingers listened. Through the ebb and flow of the music I continued to watch them, and at last I felt actual tears rising in my eyes. . .

"When the music stopped and people began to form into groups all about me, I lost sight of the girl. Almost everybody had started for the dining-room. I was borne along in the general current.

"My hostess beckoned me, holding up my favorite liqueur, and I stayed beside her as long as I could, but the pressing crowd finally compelled me to move on. I was so preoccupied with the thought of that girl that I felt disinclined to talk to the people around me. Instead I started off through the conservatory with the object of finding her. I came out in a small library, unlighted except for two sconces of candles and a fire in the fireplace. Here, sure enough, she was. On hearing my steps she raised her head, and to my vast astonishment our recognition was mutual. She bowed; her lips parted in a smile. 'I know you,' she said softly in French. 'My aunt has spoken about you so often. I am Zina Kousnitsova. Won't you sit down?'

"I drew up a chair beside her. Her manner toward me was utterly natural and free from constraint. She told me a few facts of her life; how she had passed her childhood in the country on her father's estate; how she was now in a convent school in Kiev. This visit to her aunt was her first visit to Petrograd. The rush of novel sights and experiences seemed to have roused in her, so far, only a slight curiosity. She was inclined to be reticent of experience. It was evident how much she preferred her own world of ideas to that of sensations, since so soon, on her first evening she had escaped from the latter to this unoccupied library.

"Having thus disposed of herself, she reverted to the subject which interested her most—books. She spoke of her favorites with a subtlety of appreciation which utterly amazed me. How was it that so young she had come by her fastidious, critical sense. Hers was an intelligence that already gleaned and sifted. She had a very real flair for style. I listened, more and more carried away.

"Gradually—with infinite tact—she referred to my books. She had read them all. And for almost the first time I experienced that elation which comes to an artist when a young, fresh mind has perceived, beneath the surface of

his art, something of its organic intention. For a while I listened fatuously. Then, gently, my interest became again my returning sense of her. I became again conscious of her hand. Close as I was to it, I could see features of it which, at the other distance had escaped me. The pallor, the symmetry, the fragility of it made it so poignant that again I felt that singular impulse to tears. There was about her something unreal, glamourous, slightly morbid. She had the formal quality of early Italian paintings, the nebulous faintness of the fancies of Poe. I closed my eyes for a moment, and as I did so I seemed to feel her slight spiritual body in my arms. It was a moment of utter rapture.

"When I opened them we were no longer alone. A child had come into the room, the five-year-old granddaughter of my hostess. She had settled herself on the arm of my friend's chair, and cuddling up to her in childish fashion was fingering her hand. I felt a sudden absolutely illogical rush of resentment. The sight of even a child with impunity touching that hand roused me to fury. It seemed to me, by right of discovery, sacredly mine. Brusquely, with no apology, I rose and left them. I heard behind me a little stifled moan, and caught the flutter of detaining fingers.

"Out in the conservatory my emotion subsided. I felt a good deal of a fool. I wanted to go back to the girl and beg her pardon. I wanted even more to rush up to the aunt and beg her to let me marry her niece. In Russia girls were married young; as soon as they left the convent or sooner. I was as excited as a boy. . . My attention was suddenly attracted by a white orchid flowering in one of the boxes at my right. I started at it as if it were, in very fact, what it so vividly reminded me of—that girl's hand. It had the same quality of whiteness, the same blue-veined fragility. I went over to it and broke it from the stem, but I had no sooner raised it than, one by one, the petals began to fall. They scattered over the floor. In the lustreless pallor of some of them I could see a thread-like vein or two of amethyst.

"When I went up to my hostess to say goodnight, her niece was standing beside her. The girl raised her eyes and across them lay a new shadow, the sophisticated shadow of pain. I can still hear the subtle cadence of her voice as she spoke the next words. 'You went away so suddenly? I hope I said nothing to offend you?'

" 'You said nothing but what gave me profound pleasure.' My own voice, I am sure, was equally grave.

" 'Ah,then, we shall be able to talk again. I have so much to ask you. You'll come back, won't you, before I go?' She offered me her hand in saying this.

Weakly I took it, overwhelmed at first to feel it in mine. I felt an impulse to stroke it as the child had done, to draw out the long, transparent fingers. I bent above it in the permitted foreign fashion and brushed it with my lips. As I did so I seemed to utterly absorb and possess myself of her flesh and spirit. She became mine, a part of me, never to be wrested from me while I live. I put it by as one puts by an emptied cup. That was all." Dalton fell to musing. His thin fingers which, during the recital, had lain tran-

quil, began again automatically to open and close.

After an interval Hargrave prompted him. "But surely you went back?"

"No, I never went back. I left Petrograd the next day."

"But you loved her!"

"Therefore, I kept her. . . Ah, you see." In his face the flame had gone out. A weariness had taken its place.

Hargrave looked about him. The shadows in the room seemed to have deepened, and the white rose to have waned a little. He rose and with a covert, baffled glance at his friend, slipped away.

* * *

White Sails Against the Morning

By GLENN WARD DRESBACH

White sails against the morning
And many pearls of spray
Tossed up on lonely beaches
I have known in my day.

Gray smoke against the morning
And dark winds weary grown
With smoke and misty burdens
In my day I have known.

And still I keep the white sails
And gray smoke in the sky—
For here against the morning
Something of both am I!

Love, call to me! I'll answer
Like a clean sail on the sea!
But one *may call and gray smoke*
Will drift in wearily.

The Physiology of Smells

By LAFCADIO HEARN

A CERTAIN Dr. Jager, of Stuttgard, appears to hold that the soul is situated in the nose, or more precisely speaking, that the seat of the soul is in the nose. This kind of doctrine brings us back to the earliest age of theological discussion when some placed the soul in the navel, some in the stomach, others in the heart; with the difference, however, that Dr. Jager really brings forward some indisputable facts in support of his eccentric notion. He claims with considerable force, that it is possible to tell upon entering a vacant room, in which a party has just been held, whether the said party was a merry or a dismal one by the sense of smell. In short, if the people composing it enjoyed themselves the room will smell agreeably; otherwise it will have an unpleasant odor. When we are miserable, he declares, we smell bad; when we are happy, we become like the denizens of the Musselman paradise, perspiring sweet perfumes. Nay, he goes even so far as to declare that as a dog by his olfactory organs estimates the character of strangers, so we also may cultivate our noses to the extent of being able to judge correctly human character by the emanations from the human body. Like skunks, we become disagreeably odorous when irritated; like flowers, we smell best when best nourished with the necessaries of existence. Misery stinks; happiness hath an ambrosial emanation, such as might be shaken from the golden curls of the Immortals; and the odor of sanctity is not a mere figure of speech, but a pungent reality. According to our humors we do smell; and each humor hath a special odor. So far we may agree with the scientist; but he goes on to observe that these odors are caused by emanations of the soul!

The fact is that we smell well or ill according to our physical condition; that sickness is apt to produce nasty exhalations and health a fresh odor by no means unpleasant—what has been called by French writers "the perfume of youth." Little animals, young doves, puppies—all little creatures just newly entering upon life have a pleasant odor. There is a fresh, pleasant smell about cleanly young children; and the hair of a girl has a natural perfume, sweeter than all the cosmetic odors Fashion drowns it with—what some Latin writers have dared to call "the perfume of Woman." Health and youth have certainly a natural perfume; and the breath of a perfectly healthy and happy person is as sweet as the odor of new-mown hay, or, as Macaulay says, "the breath of kine." Health is happiness; a perfectly healthy person is generally merry. Sickness is misery; and miserable people are generally ill. Perhaps it is therefore true that a person with an exceedingly keen nose may be able to discover the mental condition of persons by the odor they are said by Dr. Jager to leave behind them.

On Some Violinists

By ARTHUR SYMONS

IT was Pablo de Sarasate who first revealed to me, in 1892, that the passion in a Spaniard's blood could turn into fire and flame, as he drew his bow across the strings. But those fingers! Never were such fingers since Paganini's! Only, the other night, as I watched Kreisler's fingering, it seemed to me that they were at once abnormally sensitive and in their unerring agility almost superhuman. In the matter of execution there was apparently nothing that Sarasate could not do; he had sheer and absolute mastery; and the fantastic Spanish dances, with their broken rhythm, their pizzicato effects, their bizarre alternations of tone, are the real natural dances such as I heard in Spain. His compositions had a feverish, troubled brilliance, a passionate intensity. No violin sang with so strange an acuteness, became so heavenly a voice, such a lyrical cry—the cry of the modern soul. At times the strain would emerge, become almost an agony as the magical bow seemed to play a ghastly measure on strings made out of one's very nerves. So, like the most typical modern art—that, for instance, of Wagner, Berlioz, Sarah Bernhardt—Sarasate's playing was the art of *la névrose*. "In poetry," I wrote, "we have the art of Verlaine, in painting the art of Whistler, in sculpture the art of Rodin—all of them full of sensation sharpened to the point of morbid acuteness. It is just the same appeal that Sarasate makes to us, and Sarasate alone among musicians. In Victor, Hugo's phrase concerning Baudeclaire, he has *crée un nouveau frisson*. And to appeal with novel, with poignant appeal to our sensations is the aim of the most characteristically modern art."

I went to several of his rehearsals with the orchestra in Queen's Hall; there was in the stalls beside myself, always Ysaye with his black hair and a black cat that wandered about in a most feline fashion. Having read my article, Sarasate sent me this letter from the Hotel Dieudonné:

"15-6-92.

Je serai très heureux, cher Monsieur, de vous serrez la main Vendredi matin, et de vous remercier de la remarquable étude que vous avez écrite dans l'Illustrated London News sur ma pauvre petit personne. Quand je l'ai lu, cela m'a enthousiasme, tellement j'ai trouvé que cela etait artisque et même philosophique and méphistofolique. En Espagne on a traduit l'article partout et cela m'a fait le plus grand honneur; c'est vous dire que je suis votre très reconnaissant serviteur, et grand admirateur de votre esprit observateur. Cela fait bien de peur mais je ne sais pas en écrivain, surtout en francais. J'aime mieux l'archet que la plume—mais dans tous les cas je ne suis pas un ingrat et vous remercie de tout mon coeur.

Votre

P. DE SARASATE.

Whistler and Sarasate were very intimate friends; both lived in Paris in the rue du Bac; in fact I rarely met Whistler without Sarasate's name being mentioned. Sarasate's tone was a miracle, like Melba's, and he added to this

miracle of technique a southern fire, which used to go electrically through his audience. He has his temperament and his technique, nothing else. The man who holds the violin in his hands is a child, pleased to please; not a student or a diviner. And Whistler has rendered all this, superbly. Note how Sarasate dandles the violin. It is a child, a jewel. He is already thinking of the sound, the flawless tone, not of Beethoven. Whistler has caught him, poised him, posed him, another butterfly, and alive. Imagine Sarasate painted by Watts, or indeed in anyway but Whistler's! I remember Whistler's impatience with my praise of Ysaye, whom he had never heard, because the praise seemed like a poor compliment to Sarasate, whose marvellous purity of tone he recalled with an intolerant and jealous delight.

I have always thought that one of the surest tests of technique in music is to be found in the various renderings of Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*. Sarasate, when he played it, gave to my senses all the effect of the nerves of the Spaniard on the nerves of the morbid and feverish and passionate and all but inhuman music. When I heard Busoni and Ysaye play it, the effect of it on me was that the thing was neither Beethoven nor Ysaye, but it was made out of their meeting, it was music, not abstract, but embodied in sound; and just that miracle could never occur again, though others like it might be repeated forever. When Ysaye stood, an almost shapeless mass of flesh, the wonder began when he struck the first note; the eyelids and the eyebrows began to move, as if the eyes saw the sound and were drawing it in luxuriously, with a kind of sleepy ecstasy as one draws in perfume out of a flower.

The playing of Ysaye is a great mystery; it is the mystery of the flesh that cries in the nerves of the man and in the nerves of the strings of the violin; a mystery of the flesh in which beauty is almost sinful. His whole art is the art of Swinburne, as Kreisler's, by comparison, is the art of Browning. You see the music in the great black figure, that sways like a python—like Salammbo's black Python *"La tête du Python apparait. Il descendaient lentement, comme une goutte d'eau qui coule le long d'un mur, rampa outre les étoffes épendues, puis, la jeune collie contre le sól, il se releva tout droit."* Is not that the veritable image of the violinist? in his eyes that blink, and seem almost to shed luxurious tears; in the face like an actor's mask, enigmatic, quivering with emotion—as serpents do —listening to the sounds as they float up (as the cobras in India listen when the snake-charmer fascinates them), a mask moulded into the shape of sound —Ysaye listens for that sound in the depths of Beethoven and on the heights of Mozart; it comes to him, naked and living, and he clothes it with silken garments, as if it were a woman.

As for Kreisler's rendering of the *Kreutzer Sonata* the other afternoon, all I can say is that was magnificent, wonderful and perfect. He played magically; he has witchcraft; he is possessed with the passion of the music, to the point of oblivion of all except that miraculous music. There, instant by instant, from the beginning to the end, a beauty which had never been in the world came into the world; a new thing was created—for he is a creative

artist—which lived, died, having revealed itself to all those who were capable of receiving it. There is a wild, a savage richness, in those harmonies, lovely in the midst of menace; exciting exotic, fascinating; and, in a word, intoxicating. Kreisler said to me in the green room: "This is one of the most wonderful things ever written for violin and piano; it is not only wonderful, it is adorable. It has a disembodied ecstasy; the rhythm produces in me something of the sublimity of sensation produced by the service of the Mass—the rhythms themselves are a kind of religious ceremonial."

To hear Fritz Kreisler play the *Chaconne,* after hearing Jan Hambourg play it is to realize all that music can gain or suffer at the hands of its interpreters. When he played the *Chaconne,* it became articulate from the first touch of the bow on the strings. Every note lived, and with perfect ripeness; what had seemed a tedious musical exercise became a clear, various, positively engaging thing. But there is nothing that Kreisler plays quite so well as Beethoven, and the divine violin concerto has perhaps never been better played by anyone. How infinitely finer more appropriate as a form is a violin than a piano concerto! How faultlessly do instrument and instruments combine, without any of the unnatural union of orchestra and piano! And this particular concerto is great even among Beethoven's works. His fingers, trained to swift accuracy like race horses play from the heart, with checked passion; the notes throb, and their shriek is withdrawn from the strings, they cry with veiled lovely voices. There is emotion in every note of the music, but emotion mastered by art, as Beethoven mastered it.

As for Mischa Elman, for instance, the strings speak, when he sets them to reveal some beauty in music, with a perfect directness, a breadth, a gravity, which are mature already. And now, after hearing this or any other violinist, Ysaye, Sarasate, Kubelik, the two or three people who stand out above all the others, how do we hear Kreisler? Kubelik dazzles us and sets us to follow him without wonder. Sarasate stirs our blood, and fills our ears with a tone which might be either fire or water. Ysaye lulls us half asleep, that we may meet him half way in a dream. But Kreisler is gloriously awake, and transports us, not higher than the earth, into a living glory of sound. What others can do, each in his own way, Kreisler can do as well or better; and he can do all that these others can do. He is without excess and without default; the perfection which he attains is that perfection of Giorgione's, beyond Titian's, because its level never falls below a certain divine height.

Kreisler's tone has in it a thrilling purity, and it can cry or warble like a bird; there are both cries and warblings in the first movement of the concerto. His playing has that energy which comes to flower in grace, with a supple concealed agility, a skill which is never allowed to tell for itself, to mean anything apart from what it expresses. Sometimes his body sways under the music, yet is always stronger than any wave of emotion, which it overcomes gallantly. And his sense of proportion is so fine that any mere cadenza, played by him, becomes a link, not an interruption, so clearly and deli-

cately is it put in its proper place, its due parenthesis.

Certainly in Fritz Kreisler we have the greatest violinist now living. When he played the Mozart concerto, he gave us all Mozart with the god's touch on it; and not only that brightness and gaiety which everyone can give us, but the strength, the poignancy of beauty, the manly joy, which his bow creates for us at its first touch of the strings. The cadenza was fiery and faultless, a rapture, and the abandonment to it was an assertion of mastery. When Kreisler plays, the music inspires him, he sways under it as a strong tree sways tightly under a great wind. The music takes him for its voice, and becomes audible through him, yet it is he who has the power to master inspiration, to translate the divine message with his faultless playing.

I expected, when the Mozart was over, no finer enchantment; finer, perhaps, I did not get, but a thing mightier, a deeper revelation, came out of the Brahms concerto. When Kreisler played it, it seemed greater than Mozart, not because it was greater, but because it spoke in a more modern voice and because the player could put more of himself and his art into it. The cadenza in Mozart seemed to give Kreisler all that he needed, but the first cadenza in Brahms had all Dionysus in it, with all Apollo. A great wave of sound, as swift and easy as a wave of the sea, seemed to have caught and carried one, resistlessly, into some new paradise. Throughout this concerto, Kreisler was himself and Brahms, almost more potently than I have heard him be at once Beethoven and himself.

When I heard Kreisler play the warm, showy and effective music of Max Bruch, with the Hungarian cadences of the concerto leaping and stinging in the true gipsy manner, I could almost fancy some gipsy strain in the player. For all his profound gravity, his breadth, his immense restraint, there is something which boils underneath and is part of the motive power; and there are moments when I am reminded by some queer undercurrent, in his miraculous playing, of some thrilling and unexpected voice which one hears in Hungary, in a gypsy orchestra. Only while with them thus salt is scattered and falls loosely, with Kreisler it is a saviour, and adds just that "strangeness" without which there can be no exquisite beauty.

After one of Kreisler's concerts I spent some time with him alone in the artists' room in Queen's Hall. As I began to ask him about technique, he said: "We Austrians are a mixture of races. —Spanish, Gypsy, Hungarian, Latin and Slavonic; God knows what else! I adore Budapest and the musicians there. Yes, there is nothing in music more wonderful than *Tristan and Iseult*. As for me, whenever I play I lose sight of everything except the music; I see nothing but that, I hear nothing but that. I am absolutely absorbed—absolutely oblivious—whenever I am playing. It seems to me that Beethoven, Bach (what a divine creator!) and Mozart have left something over of what is dynamic in their genius for us who are artists."

He spoke with vehemence; his voice has a distinct thrill in it; his huge brown eyes hide, reveal, fire, slumbering and passionate, animal—the eyes of a wild beast, the eyes of a gypsy, and their level eyebrows; even their gestures. He

has an absolute simplicity; he is primitive; primitive in the essential, the elemental sense of the word. Like every other artist I have met, he has a fascination which is entirely his own; none of the inhuman fascination of Pachmann; either when I am alone with him or when playing in public, the sounds torture him, as a wizard is tortured by the shapes he has invoked. Pachmann, as I have written, has the head of a monk who has had commerce with the Devil, and it is whispered that he has sold his soul to the diabolical instrument, which, since buying it, can speak in a human voice. Yet I find in both an absolute reverence—an almost God-like reverence—for music as music; only, while Kreisler belongs essentially to the world itself and to the world of music, Pachmann's physical disquiettude is but a sign of what it has cost him to venture outside humanity, into music. He lives in a divine hallucination, chills us a little with its "airs from heaven or hell," and breaks down for an instant the too solid walls of the world, showing us the gulf.

* * *

Upholding The World

(Based on a Jewish Folk-belief)

By EDWARD SAPIR

They are the seven humble ones that hold
The world, this weary world, within their palms,
Chaunting unending toll of prayer-psalms
Under the breath. Their hearts are beaten gold
Upon the anvil of the Lord; their old,
Thin voices somewhere singing praise are balms
Upon our wounds. O come and shower alms!
They are but shivering beggars in the cold.

But shivering beggers in the cold are they,
Yet do they hold the world by night and day,
And who these seven are no man may tell.
Give alms! Give and yet give, nor mark too well!
Let not one of these seven faint away,
Else shall the world slip down and burn in Hell!

Kreymborg's Letter

Como, Italy.

ONE no longer wonders about the exodus to Europe on the part of American artists. After one has left Paris behind, se-sawed over the Alps and rolled down into Italy, the single reason for leaving home, if one required no other, is spread out everywhere; it is absurdly cheap to live in Italy. Even Como, haven of the tourist, and presumably beyond the reach of the poetic income, is cause for refreshing a spirit a little old and weary from everlasting conflict with the economic problem back on the Island of Manhattan. One has never had before a huge square furnished room, immune against heat, with a stone floor and cement walls and three French windows opening onto a piazza inviting one into or onto a water calm and ultramarine; one has never had this, I mean, for less than fifty cents a day, as here. And if one doesn't mind shelling out ten or fifteen cents a morning for a dejeuner of coffee, rolls and honey; with a seat outdoors under the shade of a tree, or forty or fifty cents for a colazione or pranzo comprising more food than one can conveniently dispose of, with (if you'll risk one of the highest wines on the wine list) a bottle of the white vintage of Capri for a quarter extra, one can actually exist at Como—and for still less away from the tourist. And if one must have his stroll at night, through winding alleys untouched by modernity, and his American amusement in the form of a movie, not so much now for the sake of the screen as for the plunge into an auditorium of grinning faces turned to you with an outright curiosity, as much as to say "What brought this queer fish to us?" and doesn't mind the highest seat in the house at ten cents with the music of the Italian speech billowing in gratis, and doesn't object to a weirdly garbled version of "Intolerance," with a prospect of the Carpentier-Dempsey fracas the night after, why, no special effort is required of underpinnings set free from accustomed paths by the constant invitation of the strange. All of this has been said before, but in view of the economic plight of the artist in America, bears repeating.

One sees for the first time a looseness in his walk, an easier freedom of speech; the beginnings of an unconscious gesture, something more than a stray, wan smile. The American artist is contented in Europe, as he deserves to be. He has earned unlimited credit. He has come through in the face of the most tremendous odds ever set against the growth of an artist; the egregious difficulty of finding breathing space in a soil almost unanimously given over to materialism. Today, he stands on a level with his far more richly nurtured brothers of the continent. I see, for example, no poetry over here for the American knee to bend to, as it has bent before, so readily, blindly, and with such sycophancy. The American has come through, and if he is over here now, in so many forms, he has arrived, not as one who wholly asks for some-

thing, a smattering of erudition and the like, but as one who brings his personal contribution, strange or unformed or vague as much of it may be, to the great storehouse of culture. Artistic Europe can use the fellow. It is about as exhausted as war-ridden Europe, and as sorely in need of invigorating impulses as economic Europe is in need of the American greenback.

An amusing sidelight on this question of the American abroad shone recently in Milan on the occasion of a concert by the Harvard Glee Club, which is now touring Europe. One must confess that the Verdi Auditorium, where the program was scheduled, was crowded with Milanese, most of whom came to laugh at the barbarous Americans and to vent hysterical badinage. There was, it must be confessed furthermore, every opportunity for witticism before the first note was sung. The sixty gentlemen from Cambridge were attired in full dress regalia, all of them were pale and gaunt with seriousness and quite a number of them were adorned with black-rimmed goggles of approved Charles River dimensions and design. Even to an American, away from home scarcely two months, these sixty grave young souls, laden with philosophic ponderosity, seemed preposterous in a milieu ancient with folk song and singing. And their first number called for a chorale by Palestrina!

The auditorium was soon lost, as were the men on the platform, behind the haze of the opening measures. The place changed mysteriously to a chapel reverent with chanting, under the spell of which all worldliness, and especially worldly or individual differences, melted away. The great Italian mystic worked the quick, unconscious miracle through the round mouths of sixty curious people from an utterly foreign shore. And the audience, descendants of the mystic, were transported to enthusiasm and the Italian cry of "bis." The same incident was reported from other Italian cities, as well as from communities in France and Switzerland.

One still hears vituperation for America on every hand. Many folk delight in "doing" the American, in submitting him to the most subtle and even the most obvious forms of petty thievery. This is partly and no doubt justly due to the enormous advantage we enjoy in the matter of foreign exchange, and, politically, to our withdrawal from the League of Nations. But let an American come with a painting or a play or a novel—things completely removed from Wall Street or the Bourse—and nationality is forgotten. He is greeted for what he is. I may be foolishly optimistic about the chemical properties of art. But when one has witnessed, all the way from childhood, and under constantly varied circumstances, a complete change away from the individual norm in the presence of some direct communication from another individual through the medium of interpretation from a third (i. e., a composer being sung by a singer to an audience; all three distinct entities), one may put in a claim or two for art as a channel to brotherhood, however ephemeral.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

Reviews

THE PLAYS OF ALFRED KREYMBORG

THE whimsical, the fantastic, all the dear inconsequential doings of fairies, are not merely born of the dream-caprice of the special mind, they are an integral part of the spiritual life of the race. Fantasy not only shuts sound-proof door on the too violent and arduous adventures of reality; in permitting a return to the child-state, where no intellectual morality demands resolution and where inaction has no consequences, it allows evasion of that responsibility that the spirit's impotence creates for itself—responsibility for endless processions of affirmations, each exploding like a bubble at the moment of greatest expansion. Yet this instinct for whimsy in daily life only finds full liberation in the happy scheming of children. The adult, complex and grotesquely shy, stifles the impulse of Let us Pretend and finds makeshift satisfaction in the elves and fairies created to supply his need.

This native playfulness so heavily denied an outlet is just what Kreymborg makes manifest in his earlier book, "Plays for Poem Mimes." Here his most joyous miming takes place on no remote playground of the spirit but accompanies the daily and common gestures of being. He does not create symbols as much as express through familiar and inanimate things that henceforth remain endowed with a quaint and sometimes a sinister life. Thus his fancy is not extraneous to, but involved in and dominating, reality through which it meanders like a dancing thread.

In these plays he is only rarely the satirist, and then a satirist with an unfamiliar grin—peeping through drawn shutters at the delicately grotesque but never monstrous show. His laughter here is never bitter, seldom even ironic. In "Lima Beans," for instance, there is no mockery only a gentle self-raillery as the ego dances in amused recognition of the innate drollery of its own reactions. It is laughter turned inward, life mimicing itself, making a tender ritual with quaint and elf-like gestures.

Kreymborg combines in his art—and this applies to his poetry as well as to his drama—a sadness and drollery, irony and that sorcery that is related to the early religious gestures of primitive peoples reacting to the sentiment of wonder. With all he has an elfin effrontry, a certain piquant impudence—qualities that from time immemorial have been characteristic of the art of puppeteers. Indeed Kreymborg writes as though he might be descended from generations of puppeteers. In him their diverse gestures seem to have fused into a single and unique art that contains in its dancing words motion, rhythm and design. And his is a dancing mind that postures, sways and pirouettes though only to its own inevitable rhythms. For he is singularly impervious to influences that usually affect the impressionable artist clay. He does not reach out to others, absorb and assimilate. He is not in the literary sense carnivorous in that he does not need to hunt, much less to kill, for his mental larder. And I feel in these

plays a daringly challenging yet illusive sprite that incongruously makes the sign of the tongue in cheek—nay more, the sign of the thumb and nose—and side-steps the flung stone.

I feel too, a gallant spirit that dances till it is stricken, and when the blow falls it neither whines nor curses. Instead there is silence . . . and consciousness flowing out as through a wound, as in the wistful shadow-play, "Blue and Green," in which life spreads into itself like emptied water:

> Let sorrow have its way with us
> Like the sea with a stone.

And in all Kreymborg's fantasy, as in the poignant grotesques of "Cloyd Head" and in the wierdly lovely imaginings of Jeannette Marks, there is this sense of vast pity of life.

In "Plays for Poem Mimes" he turns into by-paths of the mind, crevices like those covered fissures of earth where unsuspected flowers are and ferns grow delicately like a fine hair. And he alternately dances and meanders, using his divining rod with a queer quick turn of the thought that leaves you wondering if the gesture is one of naivete or finesse.

But in his latest delightfully named book, "Plays for Merry Andrews" this wistful fancy has become harder, less subjective, taking to itself more palpable contours, and the fairy playground is retreating . . . retreating . . . the dramatist has gained much in technique and mastery of form. He no longer gives me a sense as of dissolved life spilling and wasting itself. His thought is harder at the edges. So too is the laughter that is no longer of such a light and silvery timbre—guffawing of gnomes well out of sight behind sheltering leaves. The sprite has now come into the open and hurls his shafts in the sun. And the laughter is louder—and a little grimmer.

All hail to laughter! and to all the great and bitter laughers.

More salutary than blackened dollmen, high-jigging for the wind's sport, or moving heads twelve feet lifted and dripping on prancing feet, this laughter that impales as on a spike the mean and amazing gestures of humanity.

Not such jagged and titanic laughter scratching its way through shut teeth as was Heine's and Voltaire's, nor acrid, lava-flowing as Moliiere's, this in "Plays for Merry Andrews," but a pealing laughter too shrill to be silvery. It is long-drawn as screech owl's and as penetrating in "Vote the New Moon." This "Toy Play" though given by living actors in that most valiant and uncommercial of little theatres, The Provincetown, is essentially a play for puppets. It will undoubtedly be further heard from. It is a biting satire of America —America politically miming and solemnly swaying in Jehovahian mask.

Two phases of development stand out in these plays. One is exemplified in the more objective treatment and broader humor of the American Folk Play, "Uneasy Street." This describes a wider circle than the writer has hitherto reached without his immediate arc of consciousness, and reveals his new apprehension of character as manifested by types in action. The other, in "The Silent Waiter," shows his growing awareness of those submerged emotional conflicts, bitter silent struggles of egos bent on devouring each other, that are rarely talked about by the participants. In this "tragi-comedy"

Kreymborg goes deeper than he has yet gone into the stored experiences in the silence within him. And in his accompaniment of the sinister-grotesque to its subjective realism he symbolizes a part of consciousness, that, because informed by our fears rather than by our desires, has been more uneasily disowned than our spiritual fairyland.

The action of this strange little play takes place in the dimly lighted window of a cafe, where two men sit drinking on the wedding eve of the younger. The two are seen only in profile, and between them the entrances and exits of the waiter whose head is hidden by the upper frame of the window, until at the end of the play he stoops forward and in doing so reveals a death's head. In the management of light and shadow, appearance and disappearance of glasses, etc., the suggestion of the grotesque is carried without the action.

Kreymborg has here achieved a surcharged atmosphere, that recalls the early Maeterlinck, while in "Hal" he probes even if he does not quite explore, a more complex consciousness than Maeterlinck ever hinted. At times, when the two men touch and move in a tense circuit about the differing conceptions of the absent girl they both love, he creates the effect of spirit spilling over the edges of its human contours, life emerging into life as colors run together. I feel this sense of fused and fluid life—though expressed in another medium and by a very different writer — in Waldo Frank's "Dark Mother." In Frank's work it is a darkly rushing, green-swirling torrent that throws up bubbles like drowning breaths, light-shot and golden bubbles that drift and break one upon the other, swirl mistily and fall apart to be sucked down again into the dully thundering river. In Kreymborg's piquant dialogues this life current is a thin stream, sometimes a mere silvery thread that holds as a string its beads the quaintly doll-like bodies. In "The Silent Waiter" it might be likened to severed veins, to which you could hardly apply the bitter verb *to bleed*, so gently do they slip one into the other.

The dialogue is in tense rhythmic prose, moving in rapid time. Its incomplete phrases are freighted with implications of the unspoken word. The writer is not now watching a ray of fantasy dance over dormant or acquiescent life coiled beneath, but life itself arisen and inexorably advancing, demanding stare for stare. And for a third of the play he meets it with a fairly unflinching eye. Hal, after disclosing that he has been loved and discarded by the girl whom his friend is about to marry, paints to the as yet only vaguely shaken boy that girl as the boy does not know her—monstrous, implacable, demanding not only service of her lover's self...adventure of such service like a walk to the pier's end and back may be exhausted in an hour...but the daily annihilation of his very self, the disintegration and painful reforming of his life's contours that must be stretched to embrace her crystal thought of him. And you picture Jim's fate and after him an endless procession of victims—each living case to be made malleable in its own fire and bent and tortured into shape for the unchanging arch of her ideal. Even when Hal, warily as one breaking evil news, proposes the death pact, Jim's willingness to die before experience at the sug-

gestion of the stronger may be accepted as possible though unlikely. But now you find—and with no hint of self-deception or complexity of motive—that the older man has decided that his friend shall die solely that their double sacrifice may have a salutary effect on the spiritual nature of the girl, who after such a "recrudescence of the search and the discovery" will realize "that her love for a man is merely love for herself." This attempt to supply Hal with a noble motive is an evasion of life—an evasion that has the effect of suddenly relaxing the emotional tension. It is as though life, at the flicker of an eye from her unlovely nakedness had slid out of her persuader's grip. Nor is she again to be cajoled even by the very beautiful ritual of echoing toasts and clinking glasses with which the two men approach the final "sip."

Yet in this little drama of spiritual exploration Kreymborg has greatly adventured. It remains one of his most interesting and provocative plays, at once a promise and a prophecy. It seems to be his instinctive recoil from the harshness of the actual, that evasion that fantasy alone so graciously permits, that has made less successful the fusion of those darker currents of the fantastic and the real than in his earlier plays when both were nearer the shining surface.

There is, however, one play that I wish had not been included in this group. "At The Sign of the Thumb and Nose." "an unmorality play" seems to have been exhumed from some early manuscript—where it had much better have been left to discolor in peace. Its humour lumbers on hob-nailed feet and its "unmorality" has the fatal smugness and certitude of early youth.

"Monday," "a Lame Minuet," is, however, a sparkling comedy through which life dances as no one but Kreymborg could make it dance in a New York tenement. But it is in "Uneasy Street" that I think the artist touches his highest achievement. In this rollicking but penetrating and wholly delightful study of Varick or any other street, Kreymborg happily announces the arrival of the American Folk Play. It is remarkable for its broad and confident treatment of types almost untouched in American literature, types that might be called peasants of the asphalt. Here rich and soft as a carpet of daisies on a city lot is the whole cloth of life. Here too, more than in the earlier plays, the artist projects his characters and steps back into the shadow. In "When The Willow Nods" in Poem Mimes, for instance, you are conscious of the elfin troubadour though you may yield yourself to the illusion of the delicate apparitions he conjures. In "Blue and Green" and in "People Who Die" you hear the indrawn sound of the lives that have touched the poet's life still murmuring in his consciousness as in a shell. Even in "Vote the New Moon" he permits you—the while aware of your host—to peep with him through his colored window at the great national farce of election day. In all it is as though a diaphanous fabric floats from the creator and swirls about his children till he and they undulate with the motions of one dancing body. And in some of the little intimate dramas this has a gripping effect. It would have greatly weakened "Uneasy Street." But here the people are palpable and independent entities. You can almost

smell their separate smells as they sidle into the undertaker's parlor and circle wearily about the ebony coffin. And though this play has neither sentimentality nor any kind of cheap appeal, its broad and earthy humour and quality of suspense supply the better elements of a popular success—if a Broadway manager will ever lift his head far enough above his rut to see it.

And much of Kreymborg's work has qualities that should bring it into living circuit with the people. His use of rituals alone should establish *rapport* with an audience. Roaring rituals of steel, throwing off impressions from the glowing die, offer only product of the creative gesture. But the rituals of art and religion in some sense communize the creative gesture itself. The almost hypnotic power of ritual has been one of the chief drawing elements not only of all religions, but of all group movements. Societies come into being for a purpose, a theory or an ideal, but they live by and eventually die in their rituals that continue to function while holding dry bones together. The admission to a rite is as a reaching of flags to emptily waving hands. It raises the general level of self-esteem by enabling the most insignificant to join in the collective dance. And the immediacy of appeal of any work of art is largely determined by its ritual. This is absent in the work of some of the great creators. Dostoevsky, for instance, and Whitman were both too engrossed, one with the truth of changing contours contained in each successive moment and the other in surrounding all contours with his own, to intone their odysseys except at occasional moments. Their work makes way by the pressure of the enormous life it carries; it does not make contacts, it overwhelms. But Poe's poetry owes much of its wide if tardy appeal to its ritual. Unluckily for him it was his own, calling for exposition rather than for joyous recognition. This applies even more to the paintings of Van Gough, whose ritual the crowd has yet to learn by heart.—I use the word crowd in the limited sense; Van Gough will never be popular in any other.—And Kreymborg, too, naturally expresses himself in a ritual that, unfamiliar because rigorously his own, is yet blythe invitation to the dance.

Puppet plays and literature besides their universal appeal for children, have always appealed primarily to the peasantry and artists both of whom retain in their essence something of the eternal child. Yet this country, that must have in the blood of its masses an admixture of the rich peasant cultures of the world, has in the spiritual sense no peasantry. Its workers, whether children of uprooted emigrants or descendants of pioneers, are aspirants for, if they have not already graduated into, the great middle class. And they are too "wise" in the street gamin sense of the word to confide in their own emotions. Their technical information, superficially absorbed, has created a spurious scepticism. Individually—in any intellectual sense—they may be said not to function. Yet in the group sense Americans are the most malleable of peoples. With a child-like confidence, amounting to hero-worship in their leaders and hypnotically open to suggestion, they are a people whose art sense could be developed by intelligent direction. But those who have power

to direct—editors, theatrical managers, critics and intellectuals generally—share their intellectual timidity. With few exceptions even those who head the few real art movements of the country are secretly influenced by each other, while at the same time they fear to lose to each other austere report. Thus instead of independent individual judgments we have gobs of amalgamated opinion. And though the group is smaller and more intellectually aristocratic it is none the less a group. Sometimes this want of self-belief acts inversely. Thus when a man like Sandburg gets some popular acclaim intellectuals begin to look askance at him, because lacking spiritual self-reliance they fear to become identified with the crowd.

These contributing causes—an overgrown middle class whose well paid servants in the art-trade already supply the stabilized product, and the universal lack of self-belief in individuals—explain why little theatres flicker for a golden moment and go out, and why authentic artists like Alfred Kreymborg are denied a hearing in their own country. The plays of Kreymborg are not merely the intellectual experiments of a craftsman interested in dramatic innovations. They are the creations of an intensely individual artist who is not a follower, but an explorer and breaker of new paths—an artist whose importance to the young American drama has not yet begun to be estimated. This drama is already at our doors, but like the fruit that is left to rot upon the ground in some of the Western states, it awaits the artistic middleman to purvey it to the crowd.

THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.

BY OSCAR WILDE

(*Mitchell Kennerley*, 1921).

THE full title of the much talked-of "Oscar Wilde find" just published by Mr. Mitchell Kennerley (New York) is as follows: *"The Portrait of Mr. W. H., as written by Oscar Wilde some time after the publication of his Essay of the same title, and now first printed from the original enlarged manuscript which for twenty-six years has been lost to the world."*

Be it said at once that there can be no vexing question as regards the authenticity of the new version. Neither the publisher nor the public have been taken in by a specious counterfeit—it is *pure Wilde* throughout, down to the punctuation marks. This will be a more grateful word to the general reader than to the wicked few who would like to have seen a controversy raised over the genuineness of the "find."

The question of its literary importance, is another matter, and it will of course be variously viewed by those who are relatively indifferent to the author and those who are of the pronounced Wildean cult. A compromise opinion would, I venture to say, make no difficulty of accepting the work in its present form as a valuable addition to the Wilde legacy.

In its older and slighter version, "The Portrait of Mr. W. H." has been so long before the public that a criticism of the theory put forth in this essay respecting the identity of the person to whom Shakespeare's Sonnets were addressed, or of its literary treatment, is hardly

called for at this time. Still, a few remarks may be offered in compliment to the treasure-trove for which so many devoted Wildeans (or should one say Oscarians?) are now giving thanks, and the same may possibly be of service to the less ardently concerned reader.

Early in his career Oscar Wilde took up the paradox, saw that it was good, and labored to apply it both to the conduct of his life and the expression of his literary talent. It was not original with him—Baudelaire, for instance, who contributed much to the Wildean masque, had done the trick before him, though with far less noisy *réclame*, for the French are not so easily shocked as their Anglo-Saxon neighbors, and they are, besides, more tolerant of the vagaries of "genius," moral and otherwise. In one of his later confessions Wilde laments his addiction to the Paradox and attributes to it the fatal misfortunes that put an end to his career of splendor and success. In this he was doubtless right, but it is curious to note how his inalienable Paradox—not to be divorced from him either in life or in death—is now again working for his literary rehabilitation! Is it not delightfully manifest in the recovery of this lost MS.? Are not the many editions of his books that have appeared within the past decade overwhelming evidence of the fact? Hardly, one thinks, could the man who died so wretchedly and obscurely in Paris twenty-one years ago, be made to realize the change that has since befallen his literary fame, or credit the full reversal of that dread attainder under which he was powerless to create, and indeed lacked heart to live out the normal term of life. Here in truth is the Paradox working a miracle for him who perished its martyr and idolator.

To those—it must be granted—elect and initiate few who so interpret the destiny of Oscar Wilde, there is a peculiar gratification in the discovery of the present work. For it exhibits the Great Fantastic in his most plausive and fascinating vein of paradox—not seriously deceiving us for a moment, but always enthralling and delighting us, and not least of all when he laughs away the whimsical hypothesis which he had constructed with so much artful care and far-sought erudition. Never, perhaps, was so agreeable a book built up on matter so slight; the artist has only a cobweb filament to go upon, yet his careless ease and hardihood are maintained to the end, when he makes his ironical bow, without having to blush for a single awkwardness.

There is, of course, a more pregnant and esoteric reason why your true Wildean will hug himself over this book. In several of the added or interpolated portions, the author exposes with flawless phrase the very heart of his own idiosyncrasy—that which still remains a tragic, insoluble enigma to some of the closest students of his life and work. This brief quotation will sufficiently illustrate my meaning.

"As from opal dawns to sunsets of withered rose I read and re-read them (the Sonnets of Shakespeare) in garden or chamber, it seemed to me that I was deciphering the story of a life that had once been mine, unrolling the record of a romance that, without my knowing it, had colored the very texture of my nature, had dyed it with strange and subtle dyes. Art, as so often happens, had taken the place of personal experience.

I felt as if I had been initiated into the secret of that passionate friendship, that love of beauty and beauty of love of which Marsilio Ficino tells us, and of which the Sonnets, in their noblest and purest significance, may be held to be the perfect expression."

A considerable portion of the new text deals with the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, and deals with her, one is glad to note, in a manner consonant with Wilde's clear-eyed sanity—when he is acting the critic in sober earnest, be it understood. He refuses to identify her with the too convenient Mary Fitton, Pembroke's one-time mistress and maid-of-honor to Elizabeth; shrewdly, as we think, discarding a theory which has added boresomely to the literature of the Sonnets, though acute Shakespearians like our own Dr. Rolfe have had no difficulty in ventilating it. Wilde thinks the woman thus alluded to in the Sonnets was probably the profligate wife of some old and wealthy citizen, and he indulges his fancy in supposing Willie Hughes, his imaginary boy actor, to have been for a time the toy of her passion. All this section is new, i. e., formed no part of the heretofore known Essay, and is full of curious matter, together with no lack of brilliant perversity.

The book is handsomely printed in an attractive format, and is noticeably free of typographical blunders. It carries as frontispiece a reduced facsimile of the last page of Wilde's manuscript.

MICHAEL MONAHAN.

THE GLASS OF FASHION

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE MIRRORS OF DOWNING STREET."

(*Doran*, 1921.)

HERE is a powerful, an unsparing, indictment of contemporary Fashion—that Fashion which is the apex of the social structure. That Fashion which, in a setting of shrill display and exuberant self-advertisement, flourishes in the glare of a perpetual spotlight. That Fashion which, in its morals, its manners, its attitude toward life, sets an example for the rest of the world to follow. For its influence is incalculable. And "it is not a question. . . whether Fashion is worse than it was or better, it is a question whether it is a help or a hindrance, whether it is adequate to the present crisis in the fortunes of civilization."

This is not a book of snarling, envious disparagement. It is not abusive. The author has not collected a mass of vicious gossip and then swaggered forward to call names at the top of his voice. It is very able, constructive criticism; clear-sighted; intensely sincere. It is also scrupulously fair.

Fashion is not condemned upon hearsay or backstairs evidence, but in the persons of its representatives, Mrs. Asquith, Colonel Repington, and their friends—certain sections of the aristocracy of England—it is allowed to speak in its own defense. Apparently it does not realize that a defense is necessary, and recklessly, hopelessly, it gives itself away. It has become so broad that it is amazingly shallow. Mrs. Asquith belongs to that "insurgent class

of the commercial rich which broke into society soon after the second Reform Bill, and during the years of King Edward's reign, completely overwhelmed it." Colonel Repington is of the aristocracy. They show us a bizarre and ungracious society whose chief requisite for leadership is an innate vulgarity of soul.

In the midst of the demoralizing clamor and egotistic atmosphere which pervades it, what has become of the great traditions of the English aristocracy? Have they been lost irrevocably, buried beneath the debris of discarded virtues—decency, dignity, moral earnestness, self-restraint, good manners? Or will women like Lady Harrowby, Lady Frances Ryder, the Hon. Mrs. Henry Edwardes and Mrs. Graham Murray, whose lives are guided by the old ideals and traditions and who are the true representatives of aristocracy in that they both recognize and fulfil its obligations, will they and the many others like them be able to restore Fashion to its equilibrium?

The author states the case for each side with stimulating directness and brilliancy. With rare insight and a strict regard for truth he acknowledges the virtues of Fashion as well as the shortcomings of aristocracy.

If, as he believes, the world is moving forward towards a far greater renaissance than that of the sixteenth century, to whom are we to look for guidance? "Can Fashion help us, can Mammon help us, to enter into a new birth of the human spirit?" There should be at the head of the state an aristocracy of intelligence. "Intelligence must become a passion." For in spite of "all the goodness and sweetness that exists in England," the state of public morality forces him to the conclusion that *"goodness is not enough*... Aristotle made a vital distinction between the excellence of conduct and the higher excellence of intelligence." And the author believes that "our salvation will come from the good of all classes—from the good among the aristocracy, the good among the numerous middle classes, the good among the manual workers"—and that this work of salvation will proceed from the knowledge that, "beyond obedience to morals, there is a boundless region of spiritual excellence waiting for the exploration of mankind. The good will become our aristocracy when they understand that goodness is not enough."

ALICE SESSUMS LEOVY.